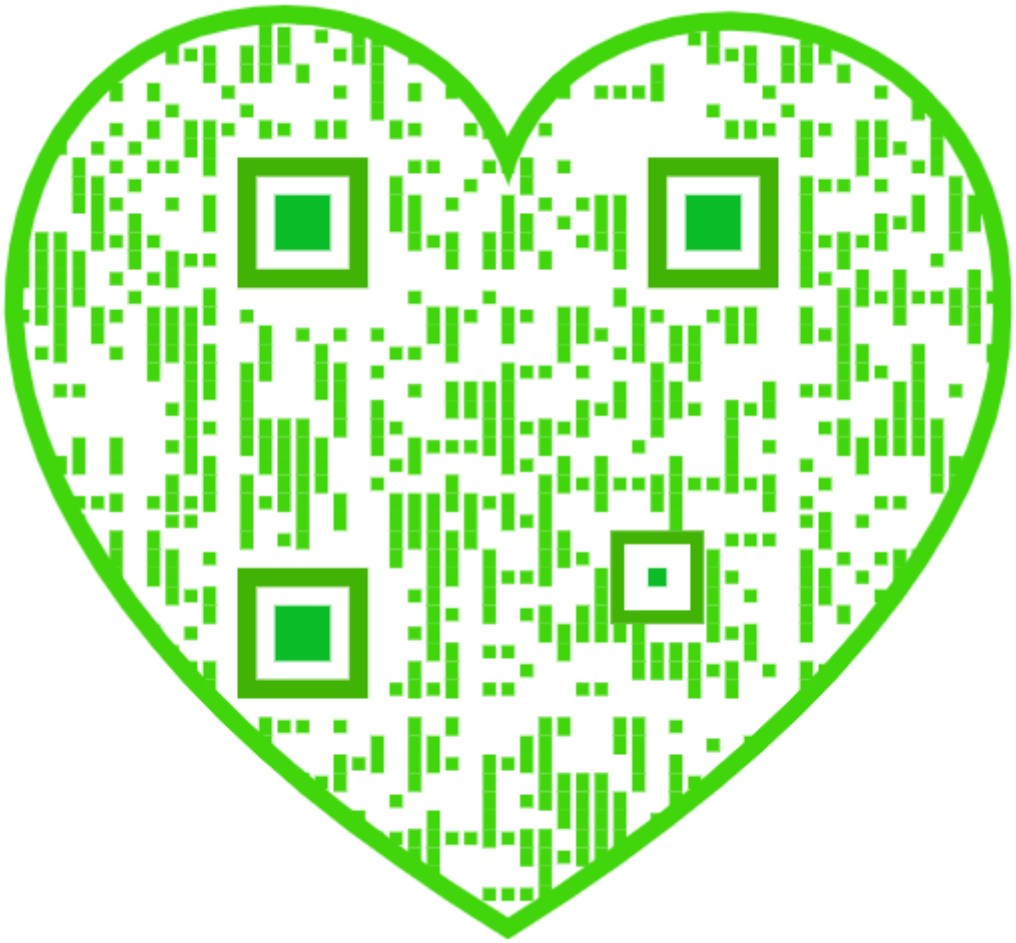
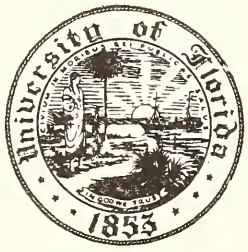
Esquire's second sports reader



UNIVERSITY
OF FLORIDA
LIBRARIES



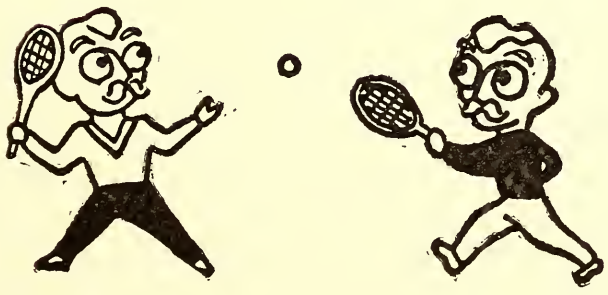
Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
LYRASIS Members and Sloan Foundation

http://www.archive.org/details/esquires2ndsport00unse

Esquire's Second Sports Reader

ESQUIRE'S 2nd Sports Reader

Edited and with an Introduction by
ARNOLD GINGRICH



NEW YORK
A. S. BARNES & COMPANY

COPYRIGHT, 1946, BY ESQUIRE, INC.

This book is fully protected by copyright and nothing that appears in it may be reprinted or reproduced in any manner, either wholly or in part, for any use whatever, including radio presentation, without special written permission of the copyright owner.

808.3
E77e

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

Contents

	PAGE
Introduction, Arnold Gingrich	vii
The Careless Hunter, Homer James	1
I Won't Do No Dive, Harry Sylvester	4
The Hearse of the Speedway, Peter Granger	13
The Horns of the Bull, Ernest Hemingway	23
Send Me In, Coach, F. Scott Fitzgerald	34
Grandstand Complex, Horace McCoy	45
The Lord's Day, Charles Grayson	56
The Come-back, L. A. G. Strong	67
The Girl at Thorps, Warren Gibson	77
Cocks Must Fight, Theodore Pratt	88
The Battle Royal, Lewis Herman	96
A Pitcher Grows Tired, Ashley Buck	105
Everything in the Fifth, Maxence van der Meersch	110
My Life with a Stuffed Sailfish, Robert Warner	119
The Rumbold 500, Maxence van der Meersch	123
The Parmachene Belle, Edw. L. Peterson	130
Up Queer Street, Len Zinberg	136
Homecoming at State, Herb Graffis	144
The Eighty-Yard Run, Irwin Shaw	153
The Old Battler, Harry Bolton	167
Apprentice of Manly Art, Morton Thompson	173
The Football Story, E. A. Durand	180
Portrait of a Worm Fisherman, Lynn Montross	190
A Game of Jiggery Poker, Robert Westerby	199

PAGE

The Melee of the Mages, Paul Gallico 206

A Pair of Vikings, Conrad Aiken 223

The Fixed Grin, Robert Kinney 236

Daughter of Danny the Red, Roderick Lull 245

The Legless Bullfighter, Marcos A. Spinelli 259

Money on Morgan, Robert Westerby 269

After the Altitude Record, Lion Feuchtwanger 275

There Must Be a Losing Coach, Sam W. Taylor 279

Sparring Partner, Carl Ries 289

Murder at the Thirteenth Hole, Wallace Irwin 300

Ill-Fated Cruise of the Canarsie III, Louis Paul . . . 309

The Battle of Blue Trout Basin, Nelson S. Bond . . . 316

Fielder's Choice, Edw. L. McKenna 319

The Atavism of Ralph Piscatore, Robert J. Kuhn . . . 323

Beware the Tremper Buck, Edmund Gilligan 330

Gigue for Hunting Horns, Reed Johnston 341

Dodie's Duck, Walter Clare Martin 347

A Gamecock Doesn't Forget, Edw. Jerome Vogeler . . . 357

Rose into Cauliflower, Mel Matson 367

Joe the Great McWhiff, Kimball McIlroy 377

Return of a Trouble Maker, James Kieran 384

The Denton Mare, Edwin Lanham 387

The Champeen of the World, Edw. L. McKenna 392

The Red Shuffler Stays In, Paul Annixter 400

The Monarch's Last Tanto, Robert Sylvester 409

On Account of Darkness, Albert J. Hobon 420

Introduction

THIS volume, although a companion to *Esquire's First Sports Reader*, is in no sense a sequel to it. While both books are compilations of selected sports writing from the pages of the last ten years of *Esquire*, right there their resemblance ends. Whereas the *First Sports Reader* was a compendium of sports articles, this one is an anthology of short stories. You can say that they both deal, more or less directly, with sports. But as between articles and stories, you can go so far as to say, in echo of a Barrie character: "Those were only the *facts;* now here, instead, is the *truth.*"

Sports articles, even the best of them, represent an amalgam of statistics, opinion, and "dope," the latter more or less inside as the case may be. But fiction, even at its lowest level, represents a *distillate* of the kind of items of factual knowledge that are poured into articles straight, with no more of a refining process than assortment, selection, and perhaps, compression. In other words, if sports articles are wine, then sports fiction is brandy. And while it would be stupid to say that the worst brandy is better than the best wine, it would be still more stupid to deny that it hits you harder!

When a Hemingway or a Gallico writes a sports piece he is passing on to you what he knows about this or that phase of sport, and presumably adding to your own store of knowledge of the subject in the process. Out of his head, then, into yours. But when he writes a *story* he is no longer concerned with the transmitting of facts, with telling you what he knows, but rather with making you *feel.* In this latter process, the heart is involved.

That's why, human nature being what it is, a good story lives forever, while articles, even the best ones, have a way of dating, first, then dying, sooner or later. For knowledge, the stuff of articles, is cumulative, and the later acquisitions pile in on top of the earlier and sort of squash them down, into one indistinguishable and accumulated blend. But emotion, the thing of which stories are all compact, is fortunately for our happiness and health no more cumulative over the years than, say, fatigue.

Maybe, rather than worry the point any longer, we could just dismiss it by saying that while the function of articles is to let you

know things, the function of stories is to make you understand them.

And that in turn is probably the quickest way, short of perpetrating an Irishism, to explain why *Esquire's Second Sports Reader* simply couldn't help being better than the first, even if it were worse!

But it occurs to us, perhaps belatedly, that we may be doing the reader a disservice with that kind of talk. Presumably you can be trusted to decide for yourself whether this book is any good or not, and the very most you want from us is to tell you, not how much you're going to like it, but whether or not it's the kind of book you like. Let's say you deserve a better break, for instance, than that little girl got from her juvenile book club, to which she had to send back their book on penguins because "while very good it tells me more about penguins than I care to know."

Well, we can promise you right now, there isn't a penguin in this book. And another thing it's fresh out of is love. Whether that's refreshing is up to you to say. But these are stories by men and for the most part about men. When they're not about men they're apt to be about horses, or fish, or fighting cocks, or even bulls. And when they are about men they are about men in the roles of pitchers, sluggers, catchers, racers, or fighters and fixers, or winners and losers. Almost without exception they are stories of conflict, which is by no means the same thing as saying that they are all action stories, or that they are all blood-spattered. Some of them are hardly for either the little-girl or the maiden-aunt trade; they are stories of brutality, an element that is only more or less sublimated in all the many fields of sport. There are others, perhaps in a sense no less brutal, but where the element of conflict is confined to the inner reaches of the mind. Still, conflict is the greatest common denominator of these stories.

That they are good stories should not be surprising when it is remembered that they come to you via original publication in the pages of *Esquire*. As long ago as the latter years of the late Edward J. O'Brien, who was the Walter Camp of magazine fiction, it was discovered that *Esquire* habitually publishes more distinguished stories in the course of a year than any of its contemporaries. And every copy of such collections as the *Bedside Esquire*, the *First Sports Reader*, *Esquire's Football Book* and its various *Jazz Books*, have all acted as so many pertinacious little drops of water wearing away the great stone idiocy of that once-current gag whose many

versions all pointed to the same general effect of "What! you don't mean to tell me that magazine has *words* in it, too!" Even radio comedians have abandoned that line, no surer proof than which could possibly be adduced to attest that a joke, however feeble, is indeed dead. Even high-court judges, and the law is notoriously laggard in such matters, have recognized and recorded the truism that *Esquire* is a magazine of literary distinction.

But by the same token, the law of averages is enough to preclude the possibility that even in a book of good stories, like this, more than a few can be considered really great stories. In all the annals of literature, great stories with a sports setting or background have the highest scarcity value. There have been some, but not many. There are even a couple in this book.

Perhaps, however, it is more sporting, and certainly it will be more rewarding, to find them for yourself than to have us try to set up any sort of signpost here to point them out.

But here's hoping you won't miss them. And, to that end, we wish you good hunting!

ARNOLD GINGRICH

St. Saphorin-Lavaux, Switzerland,
November, 1945

Esquire's Second Sports Reader

The Careless Hunter

by Homer James

ARMAND LAFLECHE was the kind of man who could whistle happily while engaged in the kind of task he now had his head bent over. It was a curious thing for a veteran guide to be engaged in doing, so that to one watching LaFleche as he worked, the nature of the task would have served as the measure of LaFleche's hate for George Martin.

There was no one near the camp in the little clearing, however, and LaFleche worked without haste, carefully. He could not have told you very clearly why he hated George Martin, although that hate moved in LaFleche as his blood did. Martin was rich; LaFleche was not. Martin was arrogant and LaFleche, a Latin, resented arrogance. Martin was a drunk, and helpless in the woods; LaFleche did not like the idea of having to make his living working for a man he himself was so much superior to. The law of the woods was that the weak died and in the many years LaFleche had worked as Martin's guide, he had often thought that it would be no more than appropriate that Martin should die . . .

The previous year, when Martin had come up for his month of hunting, he had hired the Indian, Joe Kingfisher, as a guide, having become tired of LaFleche's sullenness. LaFleche had brooded over this for a year. Being Martin's guide meant that in addition to your regular pay, you received a fat tip, whatever whiskey was left from the case Martin insisted on bringing along, and, if Martin had had bad luck with one of his fine guns, he might give you that also.

This year, Joe Kingfisher had been out with another hunter when Martin came up and so Martin had hired LaFleche again and had not bothered to hide his dissatisfaction with having to again use him as a guide. So, gradually and without any shock to any sensibilities he may have had, LaFleche had decided to kill the other man. He was engaged in that process now although Martin was not in sight.

Martin, like many city hunters, was careless. His guns were always loaded in camp; in the field his safety was never on. It was

this carelessness that LaFleche planned to take advantage of. Today, when Martin had said that he thought he would hunt alone, LaFleche had let him go, a thing no good guide should ever do with his charge in a strange country.

He had given Martin almost an hour, then begun to work. Martin had his .30-.30 with him and was after deer. He would not get a deer, LaFleche knew. Martin would return for lunch and after lunch, they would try for partridge with the shotguns. Martin fancied himself as a wing-shot and LaFleche knew it would be easy to talk him into going after birds that afternoon. Meanwhile, LaFleche worked on Martin's shotgun.

It was a good gun; a .16-gauge, double-barreled, single trigger affair with an ejector. It was worth a little over a hundred dollars and LaFleche did not like to destroy it, but he knew he would get the rest of Martin's property, or most of it. The right barrel of the gun was partly choked, the left barrel had a full choke. Invariably, Martin had the single trigger set so that the right barrel would be discharged first.

It was on the right barrel that LaFleche was working after having first removed the shells. With his knife, LaFleche had cut a plug of soft wood about three inches long and now he whittled it carefully until, by exerting a fair amount of pressure upon it, he could slip it into the right barrel of George Martin's shotgun. LaFleche then dirtied the end of the plug so that its whiteness would not reveal it and, having done this, he pushed it well into the barrel and out of sight. He then slowly let a few drops of water fall upon the plug to make it swell and fit more tightly into the barrel.

It was, LaFleche conceded when he had finished, a fool-proof job. He would load it now, just as it had been, and place it on the rubber sheet in the cabin where Martin had left it when the previous day's rain had halted their bird hunting. When Martin returned, LaFleche would suggest they go after partridge. When the first bird was flushed, Martin would pull the trigger and the right barrel, which LaFleche had converted into a virtual bomb, would explode in Martin's face, killing him instantly.

It would appear to be an accident, of course. LaFleche would tell the police that he and Martin had been hunting in different parts of the woods and that he had come upon Martin lying dead on the ground. Probably, La Fleche would tell them, Martin, known for his carelessness, had let the muzzle of his gun rest on the ground

and a plug of earth had slipped up it without Martin's knowing it. Meanwhile, LaFleche would have the liquor, the several hundred dollars Martin carried, and perhaps one or two of the guns, since no one but LaFleche knew how much equipment Martin had brought.

It was perfect, foolproof, LaFleche knew. To make it more so, he would propose a drink when Martin came back and would get Martin a little drunk before going out. That, too, would make it all the more plausible to the police. Rather pleased with himself, LaFleche broke the gun and inserted the two shells again. So absorbed had he been in his work that he had not noticed the silent figure that had approached the clearing where he was working and which had been watching him for some time. Now, though, as he finished loading the gun and snapped it shut, he saw the shadow across the clearing and looked up, an animal snarl on his lips. Joe Kingfisher stood about ten yards away and from the look on the Indian's face, LaFleche knew he had seen too much.

"What you been doing, LaFleche, huh? That's Mr. Martin's gun."

"What the hell do you care what I been doing?" LaFleche said. "What you doing around my camp?"

"I come to say thanks to Mr. Martin for the knife he sent me from the city. I think there's something else to tell him, too." Joe Kingfisher began to raise his rifle, but LaFleche, with the shotgun in his lap, was much quicker than the Indian. "You'll never live to tell him!" LaFleche yelled in a blind fury. He raised the shotgun to his shoulder, took quick aim at Joe Kingfisher's head, for the shotgun could kill a man at that distance, and pulled the trigger. The right barrel, which Armand LaFleche had plugged so carefully that it was virtually a bomb, exploded in Armand LaFleche's face, leaving Joe Kingfisher looking in amazement and horror at the almost headless body on the ground.

I Won't Do No Dive

by Harry Sylvester

Al lay flat on the bed, waiting for the phone to ring. It didn't ring and he tried to remember the last time it had rung and why. He didn't do this very long; he began to think of what might come in the mail. He called the desk clerk and was told that the afternoon mail wasnt in yet. When Al called again ten minutes later the clerk said there was no mail for him.

Al sat on the bed, his face in his hands. After all, he thought, who the hell would write to me? He hadn't answered his father's last letter, saying in a roundabout way that it might be a good idea if Al came back to the farm. He didn't want to go back there, Al thought again. It was an all right place but he didn't want to go back there like this, broke and kind of a has-been. He wanted to go back there a successful prizefighter, with a string of wins, a light grey suit and plenty of money to buy new farm equipment and to scatter around, careless-like. That was the way he wanted to go back.

He felt dull, sitting in the warm, poorly ventilated room, and his thoughts were like a weight in his head and he let himself fall back onto the pillow again.

Pete Krevitz came into the room. He was a little man who, like most managers of prizefighters, was always hoping that somewhere he would stumble over a young fighter who would be the next heavyweight champion. Coming into the room, Pete cursed and said that he'd expected Al would be out doing some road work.

"Why should I be doing any?" Al said. "You ain't got me no fights lately. Anyhow, I'm in shape, all right. I can take a day off."

"The least you could of done would be out taking a walk or something."

"Why should I take a walk? I ain't got no place to go and if I walk I'll get hungry. I only got thirty-five cents and I'm saving that for supper."

"Here's a buck," Pete Krevitz said. "I got a fight for you. How do you like that?"

"That's fine," Al said, sitting up. "That's great. Who with?"

"This big, new guy, what's his name—Waller. Eddie Waller."

"He's a bum," Al said. "You certainly got me a snap."

"We're getting nine hundred for it," Pete said. He kept looking at Al's face, without taking his hat off or the cigar out of his mouth or his finger tips from the foot of the bed.

Al whistled. "Nine C's. Say, for nine C's I'd fight the Marines."

"They don't want you to fight the Marines."

"What do you mean?"

"Just that that ain't what they want you to do."

"What do they want, then?"

Pete looked at Al for a few seconds. There was almost a glint in his small eyes. "You gotta take a dive," he said.

Al got up and stood, straddle-legged, one hand and a finger pointing at Pete. "I ain't taking no dive," he said. "Not for no one and leastways not for a bum like Waller."

"Don't be a damn fool," Pete said. He wasn't angry. That was what Al noticed and it made him uneasy.

"I got a rep," Al said.

"Ever try eating a rep?"

"I'll get by without doing no dives."

"You ain't been getting by."

"I'd of been all right the night I fought the boog if I wasn't sick. I'd of beat him and I'd be up there."

"Maybe you would," Pete said. "But Antrim beat you down in Indianapolis. Anyway, the idea is you ain't up there and we gotta eat."

"All right, we gotta eat, but I won't do no dive. You can always get dough."

"I can't get it now or we'd be eating more regular. Nine C's is nine C's. You never got no more than a grand before for anything."

"I won't do no dive," Al said. He turned and looked out the the window, leaning on the sill.

"Tomorrow," Pete said, still without anger, "you'll feel different when that buck is gone." He took off his hat, sat down and read a tabloid.

After a while, Al said, without turning from the window: "What the hell does anyone want to build Waller up for? He's a bum and he'll always be a bum."

"It wouldn't be healthy to talk about it too much, so keep

what I tell you under your bonnet. The Magrid bunch has got him. They're a bunch of mobsters that made so much dough shaking down laundries that they thought they'd buy themselves a box-fighter and now they're building him up."

"They sure bought themselves a daisy," Al said. "I should fool around with bastards like that bunch."

"When you ain't eating you'll do a lot of funny things," Pete said. "I don't like to play around with mobsters myself. But if we get this dough we can get to New York or out to the Coast or maybe pick up some change in Florida. It'll be nice down there for the winter."

"I won't take no dive," Al said.

"All right. All right. You're one holy son of a bitch, that's all I gotta say. I gotta tell these guys tomorrow so they'll give me an advance for us to eat. So you better make up your mind about it by then. And if you do, don't renege, or they'll fill you so full of slugs you could stand on your head without trying."

"I won't take no dive," Al said.

"All right, you bastard, you'll think different tomorrow," Pete slammed the door as he went out.

Al looked out the window a long time. Lights were coming on all over the city. Between him and the lake, a mile away, two lines of young poplars were blowing. Fingering in his pocket the quarter, the dime and the crumpled dollar bill, Al knew without much anger that he would take the dive.

* * *

When he was dressing the night of the bout, Al didn't feel nervous as he usually did before a fight. The fact that the ending was arranged and known, holding no mystery, was quieting. Al was alone in one of two small dressing rooms reserved for main-bout fighters. Pete was there and a handler they usually had, named Joe Moody. But it was as though these other two were not there.

Al sat on a bench, the bathrobe on and a towel over his throat and chest. Absently but carefully he wrapped gauze about his hand and thumb and knuckles. He looked up and was surprised to see Pete nearby and watching him.

"How are you?"

"I'm all right. When do I go on?"

"Pretty quick," Pete said. "You don't have to fix those bandages so good."

"I don't want to hurt my hands."

"You ain't gonna hit him hard enough to hurt them."

"No, but I might hit him accidental in the back of the head or the top."

"You know what to do, now?" Pete said in a lower voice. "The boog got you in the seventh and tonight they want you to dive any time before the seventh so's Waller'll look better than the boog."

"That boog would never of got me if I hadn't been sick."

"I know all about that." Pete was nervous. "The idea is you're supposed to go before the seventh tonight."

"All right, I know. I don't know how he'll ever hit me, though, he's such a bum. I'll just have to stand there and let him hit me."

"I don't care what you do," Pete said in a low, savage voice; "so long as you go down and stay down before the seventh."

"Okay. Did I say anything?" Al asked. His calmness surprised him. He felt very quiet. "You got all the dough?"

"I just got most of it."

Joe Moody answered a knock at the door and a fat man looked in and said it was time to go on. A minute later the three of them went through the doorway into a corridor. It was colder there and a wind blew. They went along the corridor and turned right up a runway into a place of warmth, dull yellow light and tobacco smoke. The sound of voices rose in intensity as they came along the aisle and with his handlers near him, his big shoulders swinging loose and easy, and the feel of the eyes looking at him, Al was keen and fine for a minute. Then they were in the ring and Waller was already there, across it, bigger than Al but square in the shoulders and no hitter.

"Go over and shake hands with him," Pete said.

"He should come over to me," Al said.

Pete cursed and Al went over. "Luck," he said. Waller smiled the forced, false grin of the unsure fighter. Al saw that Waller was a little scared even knowing he was going to win.

"Thanks, kid," Waller said, taking Al's hand in both his own. Waller's handlers looked at Al. They were smiling two ways, with the mouth and with the eyes.

Back in the corner Pete whispered to Al: "There's the Magrid bunch near the ring."

Al saw some flashily-dressed men talking and smoking together. They didn't look much different from the other people near the ring, only a little better dressed. It wasn't a very big fight club they were all in that night.

Joe Moody held the six-ounce gloves and Al slipped his hands into them. These gloves always felt small after the big training gloves. Joe Moody was pale and quiet. Al had had him for a handler before and he was usually gabby. After all, Al thought, what the hell is there to talk about tonight.

When Al and then Waller were introduced, neither of them got a very big hand although Al got the bigger one and when Waller was introduced someone in the rear yelled: "Throw him out. He's a bum. He stinks."

Al glanced at the Magrid bunch near the ring. They didn't seem bothered much. Their heavy-lidded eyes blinked slowly and they seemed very satisfied with their cigars.

The first round was easy for Al. Waller was as bad as he had thought. Waller swung clumsily and didn't land a solid punch. Al shook him with short rights under the heart and made him look silly with straight lefts. The crowd gave Al a big hand when the round ended.

"What the hell's the matter with you?" Pete said.

"Why, isn't it all right for me to look pretty good for a while? I got to dive soon enough."

In the third and fourth rounds Al let Waller hit him, although he cushioned the punches pretty well with gloves and arms. When Waller swung his left hook it was wide and long, not quick and short and snapped as a hook should be. A couple of times Al just caught himself as he was going to let go with a straight right, which is always the answer to a wide left hook, since the right goes straight and inside the hook and you not only hit your opponent but the deltoid of your right arm cushions his blow. It was Al's best punch and he caught himself as he started to throw it a couple of times and just blocked Waller's hook, instead.

After the fourth round, Pete said he thought it was time Al took the dive. "You're making me nervous the way you got that right cocked. Every time he swings that round house left I think you're going to let go."

"I won't let it go," Al said. He felt tired. Not from fighting.

It was a new kind of tiredness. "I'll dive now. I don't know how the hell you do it, but—"

"Just drop if he swings anywhere near you," Pete said.

"That's swell," Al said. "That'll look swell."

He'd do it early, Al thought. They were sparring near the center of the ring. Al purposely dropped his guard more than usual and Waller swung his long left. It hit Al with surprising force before he could even partly block it. Al shook his head to clear it. Eagerly, for the first time almost savagely, Waller came in for the kill. He swung his left again and Al's right moved inside it in a straight line, although Al didn't know it. All Al felt and knew at first was the shock of Waller's punch where it struck his deltoid. Then he saw Waller's face growing blank and dropping and twisting away in the same movement, the mouth falling into a startled roundness and the eyes growing empty, the face twisting down and to the left. It was a beautiful punch, perfectly timed and well delivered.

Al was standing over Waller who was out cold on the canvas. The referee was pushing and tugging at Al to get him into a neutral corner. The crowd was on its feet yelling as they hadn't yelled for Al in a long time and Al was stupidly looking at Waller, limp and on the floor and quite small.

Al was in a corner and the crowd was still yelling. Waller was counted out and Al turned to his own corner. He felt pretty good. Then he saw Pete Krevitz's face and it was different from any way it had ever been before. Al began to feel uneasy.

"I didn't mean it," Al said. "I don't know how it happened. Honest to Christ I didn't mean it. I didn't think. I—"

Pete stared at him as though Al had suddenly died. "Christ," Pete said, "Christ," and turned and went up the aisle alone. He almost ran. Joe Moody had disappeared.

Al threw the robe over his shoulders and raised his glove to the crowd which was yelling a little. Then he started up the aisle alone. The yelling rose some and men and boys and one woman reached out to pat his back or to touch and finger his robe. They liked a good, clean knockout. Al felt pretty good, hearing them. But in the dimness of the corridor and the wind blowing along it he felt no way at all, good or bad. No one was there. The crowd was going out another way. Cops would not let them down the

runways leading into that corridor. Al opened the door of his dressing room and it was empty. He had thought Pete would be there.

He wondered why Pete wasn't there. It seemed funny to be undressing alone after a fight. He had always had someone near him to help if he was too tired to undress; to treat cuts and give him a rub after the shower. Al moved slowly. He didn't feel tired or hurt as after most fights. He really felt pretty good although the sweat was cold on him before he went into the shower. He stayed under the water longer than usual. His thought was slow and heavy and he figured it must have been a pretty good crack Waller had hit him. He must have stood wide open and waiting for it, because a square-shouldered guy like Waller had no right to be hitting that hard.

Al came out of the shower and again the loneliness of the room under a single light bulb impressed him. He wondered if Pete could be getting drunk; he often did after a fight. The least he could of done was leave a dollar or two for a steak before going. It couldn't really be that Pete was afraid of the Magrid bunch. They wouldn't really get tough. They might hold out the rest of the dough that was coming, but they wouldn't really get tough.

Al stood up after drying himself, naked in the dim, granular light. He had a beautiful, loosely-muscled build. His muscles were not hard but pliant and firm and his skin was smooth and silky. Women liked to touch it. He paused, standing erect, naked and beautiful and alone, and gravely considered whether the Magrid bunch would really do anything. Gravely he decided that they wouldn't and began to dress.

There was the noise of feet in the corridor and Al paused and looked at the door. The feet went swiftly by. Al felt himself relax. He wondered what was the matter with him, anyway. Everything would be all right tomorrow. He'd have Pete explain that it had all been a mistake, that he really hadn't intended it. And he hadn't. There had been the opening and without thinking he had put the right into it. Tomorrow Pete would explain for him and everything would be all right. Everything would be fine.

When he was dressed, he packed his bag. He really needed a new bag. He would ask Pete about that tomorrow. When he was ready to go, Al put his hand on the light cord, then took it away without pulling it. When he approached the door to open it he had begun to sweat a little. What the hell's the matter with me,

he thought. He decided he hadn't stayed under the cold shower long enough to stop sweating.

Al put his hand on the door. His hand hesitated on the knob and, angry with the hand, Al flung the door open. The corridor was empty. He stepped into it. Fifty yards long, it lay under a faint light from small bulbs. No one was in it. As Al walked slowly, carrying his bag, he thought of how he hadn't seen anyone since he had left the arena and the crowd yelling for him. The wind blowing along the corridor made him feel the wetness on his forehead.

He walked along. In the arena to his right, through the occasional runways, Al heard the noises of chairs being folded and benches moved. These came slowly and far apart as though only a few men were working. Noise came at him sharply as he passed the last runway and his whole body jumped. For Christ sake, he thought, what's the matter with me? It was only a chair being folded nearby.

At the end of the corridor were two doors, one going straight into the lobby, the other, on the left, opening directly into the street. Al tried the lobby door but it was locked. He turned to the street door and felt the sweat come out on him again. In the name of Christ, he thought, what the hell's the matter with me? Nothing's going to happen, he told himself, what the hell are you so jittery about?

He took a long breath and opened the street door. There was no one outside and it was colder than in the corridor. He had vaguely expected or hoped that Pete or Joe Moody might be waiting for him. There was no one on the street, not even a cop. A single light in the middle of the block cast shadows but did little more. The concrete wall of the fight club ran unbrokenly along the side Al was on. Across the street there was a big garage, dark now, and a big, empty lot. Nothing else. There was no one on the street. Al felt the breath go out of him and he felt better. Then he noticed a car parked down the street, forty or fifty yards away. It was on the same side he was and the lights were out. He looked at it a while, feeling himself tense again. The car didn't move and Al turned and began to walk away from it. A couple of punks necking, he thought. He didn't know why he was so nervous. "Everything's all right," he said aloud. "Everything's okay."

Behind him the car began to move, gathering speed slowly. He heard it come closer but didn't turn to look. Why the hell don't

they turn their lights on? he thought. That's a hell of a way to drive! Why don't they turn their lights on? The car was almost abreast of him. Its lights were off and it was just drifting along in second.

Al felt a sudden, sharp, light push on his shoulder, then another lower down, then a third. Quick, like jabs. Then he was lying on the sidewalk and he heard the noise, quickly repeated like the push. No pain. Only more noise and the quick, sharp, small pushes all along his body and it being hard to breathe on account of stuff coming up in your throat. He opened his mouth to yell but it wasn't sound that came out. The noise died slowly in his ears. Sleep was a much better thing, some part of him quietly thought. He lay there in the silent street.

Hearse of the Speedway

by Peter Granger

We had just finished making the final checks on the new Bugatti and Maseratti the Old Man had sent over from Europe. The Old Man, that's Timmons, he owns the stable, had an idea they'd be good on the dirt tracks because they were so fast on the pick-up. I was willing to follow orders, but we had tried those light foreign cars before.

Saunders, head mechanic, looked up at me. His face was shiny with grease and two black oil daubs were over his eyebrows. His eyes squinted up like a seaman's.

"O. K., I guess. Good cars. Be swell if they'll stay on the track."

I nodded and turned away. With all the cars in the stable already, the Old Man had to send me a couple more to worry about.

Then I saw someone coming toward me, picking his way through the pools of oil that hadn't drained off the floor yet.

He was just a kid, twenty-two or three, maybe, and looking just off the farm. His clothes were brand new and looked like a stage costume for a country boy in Sunday-go-to-meeting-best.

He came up to me, walking with a little swagger that I thought put on for the occasion. When he got closer I saw his skin had a hard time showing itself on his face because of the freckles. His hair was a dull, goldish-red and needed combing pretty badly. His teeth showed through a half-scared grin.

"Are you Mr. Blane?" he said. "They told me I would find him in here." (They probably told him, too, that I'd be the guy with the horn-rimmed glasses, the funny nose, and the prison haircut.)

"That's me, Sonny," I said. "What can I do for you?" thinking he probably wants to see what a racing car looks like close up.

He gave me a letter he had been clutching tightly in his hand. It was from the Old Man, and right away I began to feel bad. It was written to this kid, whose name is Williams, but written for me to read, too. It told him to report to me for work, and me to put him in as driver for the Thomson "16" Special.

Things sort of dropped inside me then. I took another look at Williams who was standing there with most of his weight on one foot and staring at the two foreign cars like a farmer seeing a giraffe for the first time.

He seemed even younger. I reread the letter to make sure I had been right the first time. I had been.

"Ready to go to work?" I asked him, wishing to God the Old Man would let me pick my own drivers.

"You mean you'll take me, Mr. Blane?" the Kid was excited and I could see he had been pretty anxious.

"What experience have you had?" I answered, figuring it would be better if I did not tell him I had to take him, like it or not.

The Kid's grin spread out till most of his teeth showed.

"Not very much, I'm afraid. I did some dirt track work last summer. Not a real racing car, but I had a Model A Ford I converted. Another fellow helped me. Made a clean sweep of the field at the Newberry track. That was where Mr. Timmons saw me. He took my name and address and said he would get in touch with me later. I thought he had forgotten all about it until this letter came the other day."

"The Old Man, Mr. Timmons, that is, keeps his promises," I told him. Under my breath I said, 'worse luck.' Then I introduced him to Saunders who had been listening with one ear, but hadn't been able to read the letter over my shoulder.

"Williams is going to drive the new Thomson job. Take the covering off so he can see it, will you?"

Saunders' mouth fell open and he moved away. He knew as well as everyone in the stable did that I had planned to put "Ace" Kennedy in as driver. Ace was the best chauffeur we had, and had been with us the longest. I had practically promised him the car, and, besides, a car like that needed a driver like Kennedy.

But the Old Man's orders are the Old Man's orders. I'm only the manager.

The Kid's eyes kind of popped when he caught sight of the Thomson. He didn't say anything that I could understand, though he did mumble something. I guess he really expected to be put in some old giloppie for a season or two till he got to know the ropes.

The "Tommy" was something to make the eyes pop, too. Even had spectator appeal, you know what I mean, long, racy lines, plenty of chromium splashed around, and a jet black body. The

red and gold unicorn rampant, badge of the Timmons' Stable, looked pretty high class.

Saunders had sized the Kid up by this time, so he opened the hood of the car like he was unveiling a war monument. The Kid gasped a little and moved closer.

There's a lot of difference between a converted four cylinder engine and this "Tommy." The Kid was taking it all in without saying a word. It was one of the sweetest sixteen cylinder engines ever made, two cycle, and with a supercharger almost as big as the flivver motor he had been running the year before. A thing like that can be impressive, if, of course, you have the speedway in your blood. The Kid evidently had, so I couldn't blame him for going into a trance.

I knew Saunders had been sore when he found Williams was to drive "Tommy." It had been his pet since coming from the factory. He had worked himself and the other mechanics ragged getting it in shape. Not that it needed much, they're pretty thorough at Thomson's shop, but you know how a racing mechanic is with a new car.

I could see the way the Kid had been impressed with the car had warmed Saunders up a lot toward him. With Saunders' help the Kid could save himself a lot of trouble, save me a lot, too.

I didn't get by without trouble from Ace, of course. He blew up. He calmed down a lot, though, when I got the Old Man's consent to have him take charge of the team we were sending abroad. Hell! I was a top kick during the war and got used to getting the buck passed from each end. This job's worse, though.

"Tommy" hadn't been out on the track yet, not even for a test run. Now that the Kid was to drive it, I thought it just as well to begin because he would have to get accustomed to it.

The Kid could drive, I'll say that for him, in spite of his lack of experience. I sent him around the track a few times in other cars before I let him take out the "Tommy." Fifty thousand bucks is a lot for a car, and one good smack-up will make it worth what the junkman will pay. I wasn't taking chances.

We were all down there the day it rolled out for the first time. The Kid got behind the wheel looking proud as punch. He loped off the first few laps to get the feel of it and let it warm up.

The first several laps he did in fifty seconds. Then he opened it up. He must have pushed the gas down just coming into the

home stretch. I could hear the motor break into a deep throated whine on the North Turn. The supercharger cut in with a scream. The car came roaring down the track moving like a black streak of lightning.

It didn't slow down on the curves; the speed increased, if anything. When it came over the line for the first fast lap it was clocked at twenty-five seconds. Everyone started talking at once. One hundred and forty-four miles an hour for the first fast lap, and still gaining speed!

I signalled it into the pits on the fifth fast lap.

None of us had expected the speed. Thomson had estimated a potential of over two hundred, but potentials aren't what win races. I had figured maybe a hundred and thirty the first time out with the Kid driving.

When he left the car the Kid came up to me. He was grinning but I saw he was puzzled.

"You didn't give me a chance to open it up," he complained. "It was good for plenty more."

"Do you know how fast you did that last lap?" I asked. He shook his head. "Just a hundred and sixty-seven miles per hour," saying it slow so it would sink in.

"Shucks," he said, "it rode like thirty." Then he looked at me with widening eyes. "*How* fast did you say?" He nearly fainted when I repeated it.

I was still worried about putting the Kid in the fastest car in the country, but I knew the Old Man would raise hell if I didn't follow orders.

I opened him at Reading with the "Tommy." The Kid could drive in a race, too, a fine natural. He had that knack that even experience won't give. That something that makes all the muscles coördinate just right in an emergency, and just right enough.

He went through the first events at a walk. No trouble developed and some of my fears were beginning to drop away.

In the big race of the day he was in front from the start. In five laps he was half a lap ahead and still gaining, though I could see he was holding it in.

He came into the stretch. There was a clear field ahead, but the Kid didn't open up. I guessed that he figured he had the race by a safe margin and wasn't taking chances.

Right opposite the pits something went wrong. The crowd was

on its feet, yelling, sensing something that hadn't happened, yet.

"Sixteen" went into a skid. It broadsided along the track. Then it toppled over. The kid was thrown clear. The car came to a stop against the railing.

I got out to him first. He was lying prone on the track, but got to his feet as I reached him. He stood and looked at the car and then at me.

"It was the damnedest thing," he said, and his cheeks were covered with tears and dust. "It just went into a skid. No reason for it."

I caught him as he fell.

At the hospital they said he was in pretty bad shape.

"He'll come out of it all right," the doc said, "but it will take time. Six or eight months."

I saw the Kid the next day. He was all bandaged up, and looked very sorry for himself.

"I'm O. K.," he replied to my question, "how's the car."

"Nothing to worry about," I told him, "a few dents in it, no harm done."

And there wasn't. It took a few hours to straighten out the body creases, that was all. We spent a good many hours, though, trying to figure out what had caused the skid. It seemed to be just one of those things.

"I won't be able to race again this year," the Kid was looking at me with large, pleading, half frightened eyes, "but will you take me back next season? It wasn't my fault, honest."

I nodded and told him he would have a place with us and the stable was taking care of everything. I knew it wasn't the Kid's fault, we all did. Things like that happen, though.

Except for conditioning, the car wasn't run again until the end of May. I put Cook in as driver and Saunders as riding mechanic at his own request. The qualifying runs were made with an average of over a hundred and forty, which is high speed for the old Indianapolis track, built for a top of about ninety.

Cook cut loose as soon as the paced lap was over. His lead grew with every lap. A quick check when he came into the pits for gas showed that everything was in order. We changed the wheels and he started again.

The race looked as much in the pocket as a race can ever look before it's over. Then Cook shot over the south retaining wall.

I got out there as fast as I could, but the ambulance beat me to it. Cook and Saunders were both dead.

The funny part of it was that the car was in perfect condition, the paint was hardly scratched. When cars go over that wall they are usually wrecks, but not the "Tommy." I had a mechanic test it and it roared into life at once.

I put Deset and Taylor in as reliefs. I thought it would develop mechanical trouble of some sort from the punishment it had taken, but the laps rolled by without a hitch.

Five laps from the finish they pulled Deset out of the seat. First they had to turn the car right side up. Both were seriously injured, but expected to live.

The car's condition was perfect.

Geran took the car at Detroit and got a skull concussion. The car was undamaged. Haynes was killed at Altoona, Myers at Oakland. Rogers was severely injured at Langhorn, Berger was killed at Syracuse. In each case "Tommy" had started off well, led the field, then crashed, unaccountably. Never, so far as we could tell, was it the fault of the driver, nor was it the fault of circumstances. There was nothing wrong with the car, before, during, or after the race. Even when it crashed a fence or a wall, or rolled over, it required just a few licks with a hammer and a touch of paint to put it back in shape.

A couple of Sunday supplements picked up the story, then the magazines. "The Murder Car of the American Speedway" they called it. We called it the "Black Hearse," and it wasn't a bad name.

I had kept the Old Man informed of what was going on. He was still in Europe. I wanted to pull it in after Oakland, but he said to keep it running.

When it went in for the winter we got to work on it. We took it down, measured and checked, calibrated and weighed, cussed and swore at every part of it. Every part was perfect. Then we assembled it and sent it around the track with a crazy driver willing to take a chance. The "Hearse" turned in an average of one hundred and seventy-five for the twenty miles. We all gathered around and swore at the assembled car. What else could we do?

I wasn't intending to race it any more. The Old Man's orders or not, no driver except Ace was willing to take it in an actual race—that was where trouble came. I had it painted white and stored.

A lot of people, women's clubs mostly, thought it should be ruled from the tracks. But the AAA couldn't do that when tests showed it was in sounder condition than most of the cars running. Hoodoos aren't taken up in the rule book.

As I said, I had no intention of running it. Then the Kid showed up just before the season opened. He walked with a slight limp, but otherwise he was in good shape. He had a certificate from the docs saying his reflexes were all O. K. He was all ready to drive the "Hearse" again, but I said I wouldn't allow it. No use getting the Kid killed.

So the fool wrote to the Old Man and the Old Man cables back saying that I would give the Kid the chariot, or else—.

At Reading, just a year after its first entrance, we rolled it onto the track. Some of the drivers looked at it, glistening in the sun, and I heard a few mutterings about the "Black Hearse." You can't disguise a jinx by painting it.

Just before the first race the Kid got a bad pain. It turned out to be appendicitis and they took him to the hospital. I was relieved. I liked the Kid.

Then, as usual, I had more trouble. Ace Kennedy was there slated to drive a Miller. When he saw that the Kid was out he came over and demanded the "Hearse." I gave it to him because he threatened to quit the stable if I didn't.

Sure, he cracked up. The best driver in the country and he turns over at fifty miles an hour on a clear stretch. He wasn't hurt much, but he was sore. He never had believed that jinx business. He did now. It didn't hurt the car any.

The Kid was all right in a few weeks. I put him into a couple of races with a Duesenberg. He did O. K. Between races he would come back to the shop and fool around the "Hearse." He didn't seem to be doing any work on it, just hanging around and looking at it, mostly.

Then he came to me.

"I'm driving the 'Tommy' at Indianapolis, Mr. Blane," he showed me the letter from the Old Man.

"Anything I can do?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. "Will you have it painted black again?"

Hell, the Kid was just asking for it. I told them to paint it and tune it.

The Old Man turned up at Indianapolis that year. I buttonholed him.

"Listen," I said, "are you going to let the Kid drive the 'Hearse'?"

He thought I was crazy and I had to tell him why we called it the "Hearse." He hadn't got it at all from the news I sent him, and when I was finished he still didn't believe it. He called me superstitious. I guess I was.

"I don't know who you'll get to ride with him," I said, "but my suggestion is you don't let it go in."

The Old Man's suggestion was that I grow up, and if I couldn't get a riding mechanic, why, he would. He did.

I called a "good luck" to the Kid which he didn't hear, and he started off, post position.

I watched that race, not from the pits, but from the stands, and with high powered glasses. Something else was riding with the Kid beside the mechanic. Something that was trying to wreck him. I could see how he fought with it on curves and on the stretch. I could see him struggling when it started to swerve, started to turn or to skid, when it failed to respond immediately to the wheel; every inch of the way he fought with it.

At the end of the two hundredth lap the checkered flag went down. I couldn't believe the "Hearse" had made it, had won. The Old Man was beside me as we watched him take his safety lap. Then he took a second and a third. I thought he was driving in exultation. I was worried, fate can be played with only so far.

Then they were trying to flag him from the course, but he kept on, lap after lap. I could see the mechanic's face as the car flashed by. The features behind the goggles seemed terrified.

The car stopped when it ran out of gas. When they lifted the Kid from the car he was unconscious, and the scared mechanic nearly so. The Old Man was rushing up and down, yelling at other owners, yelling at drivers and newspapermen, wanting to know what in the hell all this "Black Hearse Hoodoo" business was about. I saw that the Kid was in for a big bonus.

There was no stopping the Kid for the rest of the season. Records toppled all over the country by seconds and minutes. Dirt, sand, concrete, wood and macadam tracks were burned by the wheels of the "Hearse."

The Kid thought of nothing but the car and the races. He

seldom spoke, and when he did it was to say something about the "Hearse."

He didn't have a crash all year, didn't even slide into a fence. It was one of the sweetest streaks of winning any driver has ever had. Of course, after the points he rolled up at Indianapolis there wasn't a doubt as to who would have the AAA Championship. If someone else had won every race in the country they couldn't have touched his standing.

I watched him through that season, though. When everyone else was thinking how lucky he was, I could see how he fought his way through each race, struggling to keep the car under his control. It must have been hard, very hard. I could see how it was sapping his strength and vitality. But he never complained, you would have thought his life was a bed of roses. But he never smiled and never relaxed, and people meeting him for the first time wondered why he was called the Kid; he didn't look young any more. He spent his spare time keeping in condition, playing handball in the daytime and knitting at night. The handball helped his eyes, quickened his reflexes, the knitting kept his nerves down.

At the end of the season the Old Man was mighty proud of the Kid, and the whole outfit cashed in on his praises. Timmons would have done anything for the Kid, but nothing existed for him but the car.

The Old Man threw a dinner for the stable (*equipé*, he calls it). The Kid was to be guest of honor. Timmons was giving him a fat bonus check and a little silver model of the "Hearse." The drivers were giving him a watch, and the mechanics had a fancy radiator ornament made for him.

When the dinner was about to begin I looked around and saw that everyone was there but the Kid. I remembered how moody he had been and was worried. I went over to the rooming house he stayed in when he was in town. I knocked on the door of his room. When I got no answer I turned the knob and opened the door.

The Kid didn't hear me come in. He was lying on the bed, sobbing as though his heart were breaking. I didn't know what to do, so I made enough noise for him to hear. When he realized some one was in the room he turned around and tried to stop crying.

I got it out of him finally. He had been crying because the racing season was over, because there would be no more racing until spring. He was deadly serious about it and I could see that the

pain struck deep into him. I tried to cheer him up, told him that he could get in a few winter races if he wanted to, but they didn't amount to anything and he knew it.

He calmed down after awhile. I tried to get him to go over to the hotel. He wasn't interested in the dinner, he said, and what was more, he wasn't going. I had to insist, of course, the Old Man waiting and everything. He just walked out on me, leaving me there in his room. I knew he wouldn't be going to the hotel.

I looked around his room before I left. It was the usual type of furnished room and I could see the Kid hadn't gotten any fancy ideas with all the money he was pulling in.

There was just one book there, if there had been more I don't think I would have noticed, but I wondered what this one was.

It opened in my hands to a page that must have been read many times. One paragraph was heavily circled with pencil. I read it:

> "When two strong forces meet there is a conflict of power. If these two forces stay together there will be continuous clashing, but in the end the stronger will overcome the weaker, and will have complete mastery."

Under this the Kid had written:

> "The stronger overcame the weaker, I overcame the Car, and mastered It."

I reread the two. The printed words seemed true enough, but I thought of the Kid's mind being obsessed with the car, thinking of nothing else, and I wasn't so sure about what he had written. I wondered who had become the master, the car or the man.

The Horns of the Bull

by Ernest Hemingway

Madrid is full of boys named Paco, which is the diminutive of the name Francisco, and there is a Madrid joke about a father who came to Madrid and inserted an advertisement in the personal columns of *El Liberal* which said *Paco meet me at Hotel Montana noon Tuesday all is forgiven papa* and how a squadron of Guardia Civil had to be called out to disperse the eight hundred young men who answered the advertisement. But this Paco, who waited on table at the Pension Luarca, had no father to forgive him nor anything for the father to forgive. He had two older sisters who were chambermaids at the Luarca, who had gotten their place through coming from the same small village as a former Luarca chambermaid who had proven hardworking and honest and hence given her village and its products a good name, and these sisters had paid his way on the auto-bus to Madrid and gotten him his job as an apprentice waiter.

He came from a village in a part of Extremadura where conditions were incredibly primitive, food scarce and comforts unknown, and he had worked hard ever since he could remember. He was a well built boy with very black, rather curly hair, good teeth and a skin that his sisters envied and he had a ready and unpuzzled smile. He was fast on his feet and did his work well and he loved his sisters, who seemed beautiful and sophisticated, he loved Madrid, which was still an unbelievable place, and he loved his work which, done under bright lights, with clean linen, the wearing of evening clothes, and abundant food in the kitchen, seemed romantically beautiful.

There were from eight to a dozen other people who lived at the Luarca and ate in the dining room but for Paco, the youngest of the three waiters who served at table, the only ones who really existed were the bull fighters.

Second rate matadors lived at that pension because the address in the Calle San Jeronimo was good, the food was excellent and the room and board was cheap. It is necessary for a bull fighter to give the appearance, if not of prosperity, at least of respecta-

bility since decorum and dignity rank above courage as the virtues most highly prized in Spain, and bull fighters stayed at the Luarca until their last pesetas were gone. There is no record of any bull fighter having left the Luarca for a better or more expensive hotel; second rate bull fighters never become first rate; but the descent from the Luarca was swift since anyone could stay there who was making anything at all and a bill was never presented to a guest unasked until the woman who ran the place knew that the case was hopeless.

At this time there were three full matadors living at the Luarca as well as two very good picadors, and one excellent banderillero. The Luarca was luxury for the picadors and the banderilleros, who, with their families in Seville, required lodging in Madrid during the spring season; but they were well paid and in the fixed employ of fighters who were heavily contracted during the coming season, and the three of these subalterns would probably make much more apiece than any of the three matadors. Of the three matadors one was ill and trying to conceal it; one had passed his short vogue as a novelty, and the third was a coward.

The coward had at one time, until he had received a peculiarly atrocious horn wound in the lower abdomen at the start of his first season as a full matador, been exceptionally brave and remarkably skillful, and he still had many of the hearty mannerisms of his days of success. He was jovial to excess and laughed constantly with and without provocation. He had, when successful, been very addicted to practical jokes but he had given them up now. They took an assurance that he did not feel. This matador had an intelligent, very open face and he carried himself with much style.

The matador who was ill was careful never to show it and was meticulous about eating a little of all the dishes that were presented at the table. He had a great many handkerchiefs which he laundered himself in his room and, lately, he had been selling his fighting suits. He had sold one, cheaply, before Christmas and another in the first week of April. They had been very expensive suits, had always been well kept and he had one more. Before he had become ill he had been a very promising, even a sensational, fighter and, while he himself could not read, he had clippings which said that in his debut in Madrid he had been better than Belmonte. He ate alone at a small table and looked up very little.

The matador who had once been a novelty was very short and

brown and dignified. He also ate alone at a separate table and he smiled rarely and never laughed. He came from Valladolid, where the people are extremely serious, and he was a capable matador, but his style had become old-fashioned before he had ever succeeded in endearing himself to the public through his virtues, which were courage and a calm capability, and his name on a poster would draw no one to a bull ring. His novelty had been that he was so short that he could barely see over the bull's withers, but there were other short fighters, and he had never succeeded in imposing himself on the public's fancy.

Of the picadors one was a thin, hawk-faced, gray-haired man, lightly built but with legs and arms like iron who always wore cattleman's boots under his trousers, drank too much every evening and gazed amorously at any woman in the pension. The other was huge, dark, brown-faced, good-looking, with black hair like an Indian and enormous hands. Both were great picadors although the first was reputed to have lost much of his ability through drink and dissipation, and the second was said to be too headstrong and quarrelsome to stay with any matador more than a single season.

The banderillero was middle-aged, gray, short, cat-quick in spite of his years, and, sitting at table reading the paper, looked a moderately prosperous business man. His legs were still good for this season and when they should go he was intelligent and experienced enough to keep regularly employed for a long time. The difference would be that when his speed of foot would be gone he would always be frightened where now he was assured and calm in the ring and out of it.

On this evening everyone had left the dining room except the hawk-faced picador who drank too much, the birth-marked faced auctioneer of watches at the fairs and festivals of Spain, who also drank too much, and two priests from Galacia who were sitting at a corner table and drinking, while not too much perhaps enough. At that time wine was included in the price of the room and board at the Luarca and the waiters had just brought a fresh bottle of Valdepeñas to the tables of the auctioneer, then to the picador and finally to the two priests.

The three waiters stood at the end of the room. It was the rule of the house that they should all remain on duty until the diners whose tables they were responsible for should all have left, but the one who served the table of the two priests had an appointment

to go to an Anarcho-Syndicalist meeting and Paco had agreed to take over his table for him.

Upstairs the matador who was ill was lying face down on his bed alone. The matador who was no longer a novelty was sitting looking out of his window preparatory to walking out to the café. The matador who was now a coward had the older sister of Paco in his room with him and was trying to get her to do something which she was laughingly refusing to do. This matador was saying "Come on little savage."

"No," said the sister. "Why should I?"

"For a favor."

"You've eaten and now you want me for dessert."

"Just once. What harm can it do?"

"Leave me alone. Leave me alone I tell you."

"It is a very little thing to do."

"Leave me alone I tell you."

Down in the dining room the tallest of the waiters, who was overdue at the meeting, said "Look at those black pigs drink."

"That's no way to speak," said the second waiter. "They are decent clients. They do not drink too much."

"For me it is a good way to speak," said the tall one. "There are the two curses of Spain, the bulls and the priests."

"Certainly not the individual bull and the individual priest," said the second waiter.

"Yes," said the tall waiter. "Only through the individual can you attack the class. It is necessary to kill the individual bull and the individual priest. All of them. Then there are no more."

"Save it for the meeting," said the other waiter.

"Look at the barbarity of Madrid," said the tall waiter. "It is now half-past eleven o'clock and these are still guzzling."

"They only started to eat at ten," said the other waiter. "As you know there are many dishes. That wine is cheap and these have paid for it. It is not strong wine."

"How can there be solidarity of workers with fools like you?" asked the tall waiter.

"Look," said the second waiter who was a man of fifty. "I have worked all my life. In all that remains of my life I must work. I have no complaints against work. To work is normal."

"Yes, but the lack of work kills."

"I have always worked," said the older waiter. "Go on to the meeting. There is no necessity to stay."

"You are a good comrade," said the tall waiter. "But you lack all ideology."

"*Mejor si me faltan eso que el otro,*" said the older waiter (meaning it is better to lack *that* than work). "Go on to the *mitin.*"

Paco had said nothing. He did not yet understand politics but it always gave him a thrill to hear the tall waiter speak of the necessity for killing the priests and the Guardia Civil. The tall waiter represented to him Revolution and revolution also was romantic. He himself would like to be a good Catholic, a revolutionary, and have a steady job like this while, at the same time, being a bull fighter.

"Go on to the meeting Ignacio," he said. "I will respond for your work."

"The two of us," said the older waiter.

"There isn't enough for one," said Paco. "Go on to the meeting."

"*Pues me voy,*" said the tall waiter. "And thanks."

In the meantime, upstairs, the sister of Paco had gotten out of the embrace of the matador as skillfully as a wrestler breaking a hold and said now angry, "These are the hungry people. A failed bull fighter. With your tonload of fear. If you have so much of that use it in the ring."

"That is the way a *puta* talks."

"A *puta* also is a woman, but I am not a *puta.*"

"You'll be one."

"Not through you."

"Leave me," said the matador who, now, repulsed and refused, felt the nakedness of his cowardice returning.

"Leave you? What hasn't left you?" said the sister. "Don't you want me to make up the bed? I'm paid to do that."

"Leave me," said the matador, his broad good-looking face wrinkled into a contortion that was like crying. "*Puta.*"

"Matador," she said, shutting the door. "My matador."

Inside the room the matador sat on the bed. His face still had the contortion which, in the ring, he made into a constant smile which frightened those people in the first rows of seats who knew what they were watching. "And this," he was saying aloud. "And this! And this!"

He could remember when he had been good and it had only been

three years before. He could remember the weight of the heavy fighting jacket on his shoulders on that hot afternoon in May when his voice had still been the same in the ring as in the café, and how he sighted along the point dipping blade at the place in the top of the shoulders where it was dusty in the short-haired, black hump of muscle above the wide, wood-knocking, splintered-tipped horns that lowered as he went to kill, and how the sword pushed in as easy as into a mound of stiff butter with the palm of his hand pushing the pommel, his left arm crossed low, his left shoulder forward, his weight on his left leg, and then his weight wasn't on his leg. His weight was on his lower belly and as the bull raised his head the horn was out of sight in him and he swung over on it twice before they pulled him off it. So now when he went in to kill, and it was seldom, he could not look at the horns and what did any *puta* know about what he went through before he fought? And what had they been through that laughed at him? They were all *putas.*

Down in the dining room the picador sat looking at the priests. If there were women in the room he stared at them. If there were no women he would stare with enjoyment at a foreigner, *un ingles,* but lacking women or strangers he now stared with enjoyment and insolence at the two priests. While he stared the birth-marked auctioneer rose and folding his napkin went out, leaving over half of the wine in the last bottle he had ordered. If his accounts had been paid up at the Luarca he would have finished the bottle.

The two priests did not stare back at the picador. One of them was saying, "It is ten days since I have been here and all day I sit in the ante-chamber and he will not receive me."

"What is there to do?"

"Nothing. What can one do? One cannot go against authority."

"I have been here for two weeks and nothing."

"We are from the abandoned country. When the travel money runs out we can return."

"To the abandoned country."

"One understands the action of our brother Basilio."

"Madrid is where one learns to understand. Madrid kills Spain."

"If they would simply see one and refuse."

"No. You must be broken and worn out by waiting."

"Well we shall see. I can wait as well as another."

At this moment the picador got to his feet, walked over to the

priests' table and stood, grey-headed and hawk-faced, staring at them and smiling.

"A *torero*," said one to the other.

"And a good one," said the picador and walked out of the dining room, grey-jacketed, trim-waisted, bow-legged, in tight breeches over his cattleman's boots that clicked on the floor as he swaggered quite steadily, smiling to himself. He lit a cigar and tilting his hat at an angle in the hallway went out to the café.

The priests left immediately after the picador, hurriedly conscious of being the last people in the dining room, and there was no one in the room now but Paco and the middle-aged waiter. They cleared the tables and carried the bottles into the kitchen.

In the kitchen was the boy who washed the dishes. He was three years older than Paco and was very cynical and bitter.

"Take this," the middle-aged waiter said and poured out a glass of the Valdepeñas and handed it to him.

"Why not?" the boy took the glass.

"*Tu*, Paco?" the older waiter asked.

"Thank you," said Paco.

The three of them drank.

"I will be going," said the middle-aged waiter.

"Good night," they told him.

He went out and they were alone. Paco took a napkin one of the priests had used and standing straight, his heels planted, lowered the napkin and, with head following the movement, swung his arms in the motion of a slow sweeping veronica. He turned and, advancing his right foot slightly, made the second pass, gained a little terrain on the imaginary bull and made a third pass, slow, perfectly timed and suave, then gathered the napkin to his waist and swung his hips away from the bull in a media-veronica.

The dishwasher, whose name was Enrique, watched this critically and sneeringly.

"How is the bull?" he said.

"Very brave," said Paco. "Look."

Standing slim and straight he made four more perfect passes, smooth, elegant and graceful.

"And the bull?" asked Enrique standing against the sink, holding his wine glass and wearing his apron.

"Still has lots of gas," said Paco.

"You make me sick," said Enrique.

"Why?"

"Look." Enrique removed his apron and citing the imaginary bull he sculptured four perfect, languid, gypsy veronicas and ended up with a rebolera that made the apron swing in a stiff arc past the bull's nose as he walked away from him.

"Look at that," he said. "And I wash dishes."

"Why?"

"Fear," said Enrique. "*Miedo.* The same fear you would have in a ring with a bull."

"No," said Paco. "I wouldn't be afraid."

"*Mierde,*" said Enrique, "everyone is afraid. But a torero can control his fear so that he can work the bull. I went in, in an amateur fight and I was so afraid I couldn't keep from running. Everyone thought it was very funny. So would you be afraid. If it wasn't for fear every bootblack in Spain would be a bull fighter. You, a country boy, would be frightened worse than I was."

"No," said Paco. He had done it too many times in his imagination.

Too many times he had seen the horns, seen the bull's wet muzzle, the ear twitching, then the head go down and the charge, the hoofs thudding, and the hot bulk pass him as he swung the cape, to re-charge as he swung the cape again, then again, and again, and again, to end winding the bull around him in his great media-veronica, and walk swingingly away with bull hairs caught in the gold ornaments of his jacket from the close passes, the bull standing hypnotized and the crowd applauding. No, he would not be afraid. Others, yes. Not him. He knew he would not be afraid. Even if he ever was afraid he knew that he could do it anyway. He had confidence. "I wouldn't be afraid," he said.

Enrique said the word again that meant contempt. Then he said, "If we should try it?"

"How?"

"Look," said Enrique. "You think of the bull, but you do not think of the horns. The bull has such force that the horns rip like a knife, they stab like a bayonet, and they kill like a club. Look," he opened a table drawer and took out two meat knives. "I will bind these to the legs of a chair. Then I will play bull for you with the chair held before my head. The knives are the horns. If you make those passes then they mean something."

"Lend me your apron," said Paco. "We'll do it in the dining room."

"No," said Enrique, suddenly not bitter. "Don't do it, Paco."

"Yes," said Paco. "I'm not afraid."

"You will be when you see the knives come."

"We'll see," said Paco. "Give me the apron."

At this time while Enrique was binding the two heavy-bladed razor-sharp meat knives fast to the legs of the chair with two soiled napkins holding the half of each knife, wrapping them tight and then knotting them, the two chambermaids, Paco's sisters, were on their way to the cinema to see Greta Garbo in *Anna Christie*. Of the two priests, one was sitting in his underwear reading his missal and the other was wearing a night shirt and saying the rosary. All the bull fighters except the one who was ill had made their evening appearance at the Café Fornos where the big, dark-haired picador was playing billiards. The short serious matador was sitting at a crowded table before a coffee and milk, along with the middle-aged banderillero and other serious workmen.

The drinking, grey-headed picador was sitting with a glass of cazalas brandy before him staring with pleasure at a table where the matador whose courage was gone sat with another matador, who had renounced the sword, to become a banderillero again, and two very house-worn looking prostitutes. The auctioneer stood on the street corner talking with friends. The tall waiter was at the Anarcho-Syndicalist meeting waiting for an opportunity to speak. The middle-aged waiter was seated on the terrace of the Cervezeria Alvarez drinking a small beer. The woman who owned the Luarca was already asleep in her bed where she lay on her back with the bolster between her legs, big, fat, honest, clean, easy-going, very religious and never having ceased to miss or pray daily for her husband dead, now, twenty years. In his room, alone, the matador who was ill lay face down on his bed with his mouth against a handkerchief.

Now, in the deserted dining room, Enrique tied the last knot in the napkins that bound the knives to the chair legs and lifted the chair. He pointed the legs with the knives on them forward and held the chair over his head with the two knives pointing straight ahead, one on each side of his head.

"It's heavy," he said. "Look, Paco. It is very dangerous. Don't do it." He was sweating.

Paco stood facing him, holding the apron spread, holding a fold of it bunched in each hand, thumbs up, first finger down, spread to catch the eye of the bull.

"Charge straight," he said. "Turn like a bull. Charge as many times as you want."

"How will you know when to cut the pass?" asked Enrique. "It's better to do three and then a media."

"All right," said Paco. "But come straight. Huh torito! Come on little bull!"

Running with head down Enrique came toward him and Paco swung the apron just ahead of the knife blade as it passed close in front of his belly and, as it went by, it was, to him, the real horn, white tipped, black, smooth and as Enrique passed him and turned to rush again it was the hot, blood-flanked mass of the bull that thudded by, then whirled like a cat and came again as he swung the cape slowly. Then the bull turned again and, as he watched the onrushing point, he stepped his left foot two inches too far forward and the knife did not pass but had slipped in as easily as into a wine skin and there was a hot scalding rush above and around the sudden inner rigidity of steel and Enrique shouting, "Ay! Ay! Let me get it out! Let me get it out!" and Paco slipped forward on the chair, the apron cape still held, Enrique pulling on the chair as the knife turned in him, in him, Paco.

The knife was out now and he sat on the floor in the widening warm pool.

"Put the napkin over it. Hold it!" said Enrique. "Hold it tight. I will run for the doctor. You must hold in the hemorrhage!"

"There should be a rubber cup," said Paco. He had seen that used in the ring.

"I came straight," said Enrique, crying. "All I wanted was to show the danger."

"Don't worry," said Paco. "But bring the doctor! Bring, bring the doctor."

In the ring they lifted you and carried you, running with you, to the operating room. If the femoral artery emptied itself before you reached there they called the priest.

"Advise one of the priests," said Paco holding the napkin tight against his lower abdomen. He could not believe that this had happened to him, nor did his voice sound his own.

But Enrique was running down the Carrera San Jeronimo to

the first aid station and Paco was alone, all through it, first sitting up, then huddled over, then slumped on the floor, until it was over, feeling his life go out of him as water empties from a bathtub when the plug is drawn. He was frightened and he felt faint and he tried to say an act of contrition and he remembered how it started but before he had said, as fast as he could, "Oh my God I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee who art worthy of all my love and I firmly resolve—" he felt too faint and could not remember and he was lying face down on the floor. It was over very quickly. A severed femoral artery empties itself faster than you can believe.

As the doctor from the first aid station came up the stairs accompanied by a policeman who held on to Enrique by the arm, the two sisters of Paco were still in the moving picture palace of the Gran Via where they were intensely disappointed in the Garbo film which showed the great star in miserable low surroundings when they had been accustomed to see her surrounded by great luxury and brilliance. The audience disliked the film thoroughly and were protesting by whistling and stamping their feet. All the other people from the hotel were doing almost what they had been doing when the accident happened, except that the two priests had finished their devotions and were preparing for sleep, and the grey-haired picador had moved his drink over to the table with the two house-worn prostitutes. A little later he went out of the café with one of them. It was the one for whom the matador who has lost his nerve had been buying drinks.

The boy Paco had never known about any of this nor about what all these people would be doing on the next day and on other days to come. He died, as the Spanish phrase has it, full of illusions. He had not had time to lose any of them nor even time to complete an act of contrition. He had not even had time to be disappointed in the Garbo picture which disappointed all Madrid for a week.

"Send Me In, Coach"

by F. Scott Fitzgerald

THE *scene is a recreation cottage of a summer camp, crossed paddles over the fireplace, shelf of cups, large plain table and several plain chairs and a blackboard. On the board is being written a word in large sprawling letters by a small, undersized boy in a bathing suit. The word is "Wedoodle."*

As the curtain rises a rather stout, overgrown boy of thirteen, also in a bathing suit, comes into the room and says "Hey," causing the other boy to seize the eraser hastily and obliterate his mysterious polysyllable.

CASSIUS: (*the stout boy*) What does "Wedoodle" mean?

BUGS: (*visibly embarrassed*) Wedoodle? That's just a camp my sister goes to.

CASSIUS: Must be a swell camp. Where's the Old Man?

BUGS: I was just writing Wedoodle because there was some chalk here and I'm supposed to write her a letter because I got a letter this morning which said if I don't write her a letter I wouldn't get my quarter's allowance.

CASSIUS: The Old Man not showed up?

BUGS: I don't know. Say, I know my part—do you know yours?

CASSIUS: I know some of it but I'll bet we don't have any play.

BUGS: Why?

CASSIUS: Because Bill's father was just tried in court and the guys in my tent say that Bill will probably be fired from camp.

BUGS: What do you mean?

CASSIUS: I got half of it; somebody else got the other half. (*He finds a piece of newspaper from his pocket and reads.*) "The acquittal of Cyrus K. Watchman"—that's Bill's father's name—"had had—had had—had had, had had—"

BUGS: What did he have?

CASSIUS: (*a stupid boy, slow on the uptake*) Well, he had this thing, see?

BUGS: Well, if his father had this thing happen to him he'll get fired because the Old Man isn't in any good humor now and I guess

if any of us did anything that wasn't all right he'd fire us right away. I tell you I'm glad I made up my tent right this morning.

Henry Grady comes in.

HENRY: Where's the Old Man?

CASSIUS: He hasn't showed up. I came in here and I found Bugs writing Skedaaddle on the board. It's some camp his sister goes to. Some name, hey?

BUGS: (*Indignantly*) It wasn't Skedaddle; it was Wedoodle.

CASSIUS: What's the difference? Skedaddle, Wedoodle, Skedaddle, Wedoodle—

BUGS: Skedaddle doesn't make any sense.

CASSIUS: I suppose Wedoodle makes a lot of sense.

BUGS: Sure it does. It's the name of a camp. What's the sense of the name of our camp, Rahewawa?

CASSIUS: But shucks, Rahewawa is a regular camp.

BUGS: So's Skedaddle—I mean Wedoodle.

Bill Watchman comes in. He is a cheerful boy, full of energy and apparently quite unaware that his family has been featured in the public prints.

BILL: All, right, fellows, let's get together. I met the Old Man on the way over and he said to go ahead. Does everybody know their parts?

BUGS: I only got two lines. The best one is when I say (*quoting*), "Mr. Jenkins says the team's ready to go to bat down there, Doctor."

BILL: Well, he wants us to run through it once before he gets over here.

The face of a handsome young man of twenty appears momentarily at the door.

RICKEY: (*the young man*) You guys ought to be able to go on under your own steam; you ought to be old enough so you don't have to be watched over. How about rehearsing this thing, so we can give your play decent?

The boys are instantly on their feet.

BOYS: All right, Mr. Rickey.

When he goes the excitement subsides gradually.

HENRY: When my father brought me up here he said, "I don't know about the head man but if they are all like that counselor I know you're going to be happy up here."

CASSIUS: He certainly is a swell guy. Boy!

BUGS: (*at the blackboard*) Guess the Old Man's wife thinks so.

Bugs draws a large heart on the board and erases it just as Cassius produces from his pocket a much mangled part or rather two parts for it has been torn in half and he can read it only by a process of heavy concentration.

HENRY: Let's begin.

They move the table so that Cassius is sitting behind it in a judicial attitude.

HENRY: (*feeling his pockets*) Shucks, I forgot my part.

BILL: You ought to know it by this time.

BUGS: I don't really have to have any part because I only got two lines. One of them is, "Mr. Jenkins says the team's ready—"

HENRY: Shut up, Bugs. Come on, let's get going, Cassius.

He stands tentatively at one corner of the table, dashes to another corner and then goes back to the first corner.

CASSIUS: Well, I'm ready.

HENRY: Well go on then; you got the first line.

CASSIUS: (*reading from his notes*) "So then, Playfair, you are your own worst enemy."

HENRY: No, that comes later. It's the upper half of the sheet.

CASSIUS: Oh yeah, I started to write home on this the other night. (*coughs*) "So, coach, you think we cannot win without Playfair?"

HENRY: "It all depends on him, Doctor McDougall. He is our best pitcher and speed ball delivery artist and say, brother, is he good at the bat. If we are to beat St. Berries we need his services badly."

BUGS: Now do I—

BILL: Shut up, Bugs. Go on, Cassius.

CASSIUS: (*fumbling with his notes*) "So then, Playfair, you are your own—" No, I see what you mean you want to start from the beginning. "So, coach, you think we cannot win without Playfair." Oh you know all that stuff anyhow.

HENRY: What's my cue? Oh yes. "Doctor McDougall, I happened to stop by the school post office and while asking for my mail they gave me this for you."

Cassius goes through business of adjusting glasses and opening a letter. He bends over as if reading the letter.

CASSIUS: (*reading*) "So, Playfair, you are your own worst enemy—" Say, I can't read without some kind of letter. I keep reading my part all the time.

BILL: Here's a letter. Pretend that's it. Say, I'm very glad we can go on without any supervision and do the thing because we feel we ought to. Don't you feel that way?

He hands a letter to Cassius.

The Old Man, an ex-athlete of sixty or thereabouts, comes in with young Rickey, a bland, suave, blond young man who looks like all the coast guards in the world. Rickey is impatient and full of nervous energy. He makes a sort of energetic spring, signifying nothing, and gooses Bill and Henry toward the door.

The OLD MAN: I think we're not going to have a rehearsal today, boys, I think we're going to postpone this rehearsal until a lot later.

BILL: Aren't we going to rehearse the play today?

RICKEY: Hold your horses. (*He turns to the Old Man.*) Want to go in my bedroom?

The OLD MAN: No. Now, boys, I'm sorry to have to interrupt your rehearsal. What was that little play you were doing?

HENRY: We just as soon not do it because all of us are drawn for the swimming trials, two of us for the canoe and two—

The OLD MAN: Oh I want you all to do this play later. It'll bring a lot of credit on the camp and next Monday is parents' day. Do you all know your parts?

BUGS: (*from the doorway*) I know my part complete. I was just thinking if I have just my two lines to say, I needn't come to rehearsal and could go to first swimming instead.

The OLD MAN: Now we have to have all four boys here because it's supposed to be a play for four boys. You'll just have to learn to be patient, Trevellion. Now you can go to swimming and I want Bill to wait just outside the door.

The boys go out and the two men are now alone in the room.

The OLD MAN: I suppose you think you are indispensable to us, don't you?

RICKEY: Well, Doc, I got marks all over my face from playing heads up football and I'll play anywhere, in the line or out of it. My father he's got sense and I go back and sleep in the same bed with him in the fall and he says some of these men go in there and get two thousand, five thousand, ten thousand, and I go up to the State with you and what do I get?

The OLD MAN: You get your board and tuition.

RICKEY: Yes, but what I mean to say is what do you get? You

taught me a lot, I know that, but I could throw a pass like a baseball forty-five yards before I ever saw you. Gimme a ball now and I'll show you.

The Old Man: (*patiently*) When I go up to college this fall it's understood that you go with me. I thought that had all been agreed upon.

Rickey: Sure I'll go with you. Eleven other boys that learned the game in normal school. (*He spits contemptuously.*) I know what everyone got. I know what Lawson's got, I know what Cathcart's got. They come out clean and take the sorority girls out in the night-time. Sure they do. They go in with one shoulder out and the eyes closed. Needn't tell me how you played football at Michigan—do you think I like going around with my nose broken Sunday, Monday and Tuesday?

The Old Man: Shut up now, shut up now.

Rickey: Oh shut up and have all these kids admire me.

The Old Man: I know football is different than it was in my day. I didn't know what fear was.

Rickey: I don't know what fear is. I know where a play's going. My business is to bump into a play so where I go there isn't going to be any more play.

The Old Man: That's why you're a great football player. I thought we'd agreed on everything.

Rickey: Agreed, hell.

The Old Man: Don't talk so loud. You know what I wanted to ask you. Stay away from my wife; she's only a baby and don't know what she's doing.

Rickey: Then why did you marry her? Go on, anything you say, I'm willing to leave. I can go up to Temple maybe.

The Old Man: (*earnestly*) Well, let's give these kids some example of decency. (*at the door*) Hi, boys, we're going on with the play. Start right in where you left off.

The boys come in.

Cassius: I can still use your letter, can't I, Bill?

Bill: Sure.

Cassius: Well let's go on.

The boys go directly to work. The Old Man nods at Rickey—a gesture that Rickey returns with a somewhat insolent wink. They go out.

Cassius: "Dear Dr. McDougall, we have heard that your star

athlete, Dick Playfair, was a star in professional baseball this summer and therefore cannot compete against our team in the game this afternoon. Sincerely yours, Hiram Jones, President, St. Berries College."

HENRY: (*in a great flurry of acting.*) "What horrible news, Doctor! This means we haven't a chance. We might as well give them the ball game now. But what proof have they?"

CASSIUS: "He gives plenty of proof here." (*He fumbles for a moment*) "Playfair, you are your own worst enemy—" Now wait a minute it goes over to the other side. "He has positive proof."

HENRY: "I would not care so much for the loss of eleven men but this man. When he begged me to send him into the game it would become different. Playfair would take the pigskin and before anyone had known it would run the full length of the field. I have coached many teams in my time—"

CASSIUS: "Go away; leave me to my thoughts. Send Playfair to me." Now this is the place I was supposed to walk up and down. "The integrity of my school means more to me than the athletic success of my teams upon the playing field." (*He studies his manuscript.*) "Now, stay a moment." You know you're supposed to stick around now.

HENRY: I know perfectly well what I'm supposed to do. You're supposed to walk up and down. Why don't you walk up and down?

CASSIUS: How about giving me a chance? Anyway it says Bugs here.

BUGS: (*turning from the blackboard*) I haven't got anything to do till Jenkins goes out.

CASSIUS: Well, anyway it says something that looks like Bugs. (*resuming his perusal of the manuscript*) "Well let us go on with what material we have and atone by sheer something for anything we may have lost or something." (*He sighs and puts down paper.*) "I am afraid we must lose a game for once."

The Old Man puts his head in at the doorway.

The OLD MAN: All right, boys—I'm glad you are going ahead on your own. I want to get the canoes off and I'll be with you in no time.

The head disappears.

HENRY: Gosh, let's quit this. Let's wait till Cassius learns his part.

BUGS: Why not go on till we get to my line.

BILL: Give me back that letter from my father. I haven't really read it and you're getting it all mixed up with your part.

CASSIUS: (*handing over the letter and at the same time bringing out the clipping*) I thought you might want to see this, Bill. It's got a lot about your father. (*He reads:*) "Mr. Watchman seemed depressed during the trial even though it was increasingly apparent that he would be acquitted. He was like a man who had lost all interest."

Bugs at the blackboard has just written the first two syllables of Wedoodle. Bill, looks once more at the letter, evidently confused.

BILL: I guess my father's going away—for a long trip, maybe to Europe probably. Gee, this is the nutsiest letter.

HENRY: Well, what'll we do, rehearse some more?

BILL: (*absently*) Sure, we might as well. (*He walks to the side of the stage, the letter still in his hand, reading half aloud.*) "Good bye and good bye and good bye. Some day when you are grown you will forgive all this."

CASSIUS: What are you talking to yourself about?

BILL: Nothing (*He tucks the letter into his pocket and says:*) Well come on, let's rehearse.

Cassius resumes his place at the table.

CASSIUS: I'm willing.

HENRY: "Well, the game must go on. I will tell the boys to get their bats and balls ready."

CASSIUS: "Do, and send young Playfair to me. He and I must have a word or two about this."

Henry walks from the scene, replaced immediately by Bugs, all eager and ready to go.

BUGS: "Mr. Jenkins says the team's ready to go to bat down there, Doctor."

CASSIUS: (*confused*) I haven't got that or I haven't got any answer—

BILL: Oh yes, that's me. (*He draws himself up.*) I come in now. "Good morning, Dr. McDougall."

CASSIUS: "Sit down, sir. I hear bad news of you."

BILL: "I was afraid so, Doctor."

CASSIUS: "Why did you do this, playing professional ball when you were still a student at Crescent Range? Was it for sordid money?"

BILL: (*shaking his head*) "No, sir. I'd rather lose my arm than play for money—but I can't tell."

CASSIUS: (*standing up quickly*) "Then I think you had better leave the school." (*The other characters move out of the room with an expression of alarm, then come back when they realize that this is part of the play.*) "You are no longer a fit companion for my other pupils. Contamination once abroad smells like a verminal plague." (*He eyes his manuscript.*) Say that can't be right. "Contamination once abroad spreads like a veritable plague. Do you think you can have your baggage ready for the school bus this afternoon to take you into Troy?"

BILL: "Yes, sir."

BUGS: That's near Wedoodle.

CASSIUS: There isn't a single line in my whole part that has anything about Wedoodle in it.

BUGS: I just thought so because the town my sister's camp's in is somewhere near Troy.

BILL: Since our parents have spent money to send us here I think we should take advantage of every single advantage that we have while we are here. Now this is a play that's supposed to teach us how to be fine actors in the future or if we don't want to be fine actors—well to be fine actors in any case.

HENRY: Shall we go on?

CASSIUS: "You have been a good student here, Playfair, and I regret to take this step. The other boys looked up at you."

HENRY: Like we look up at Mr. Rickey.

CASSIUS: (*Studying the manuscript*) It doesn't say anything about Mr. Rickey here.

HENRY: You're as crazy as Bugs.

CASSIUS: Aw go jump in the lake.

HENRY: Just what I'd like to do.

BILL: No, fellows we got to stay here till the Old Man comes back.

CASSIUS: Well I can't walk up and down when I have this paper in my hand can I? (*Nevertheless he rises and walks up and down.*) All I can remember is a line I read in Bill's letter, "Good bye and good bye and good bye." But I couldn't put that in the play, could I?

BILL: That next line is something about "Playfair, you are your own worst enemy."

CASSIUS: "Playfair, you are your own worst enemy." (*He sighs a great breath of relief.*)

BILL: "Doctor McDougall, you don't understand it all."

BUGS: Now wait a minute. Here's where I come in. (*Bugs makes a quick circle of the room and intrudes upon the scene.*) "Mr. Cassius says the team's ready—" I mean, "Mr. Jenkins says the team's ready to go to bat down there, Dr. McDougall."

BILL: "All right, I will tell you, I *must* tell you. There was a mountain settlement near my residence and they were trying to raise money for a schoolhouse. They needed a fast shortstop. I wanted to play for Crescent Range but I yielded because I wanted the school children to learn to read and write. I guess I was guilty."

BUGS: You're supposed to get up here now, Cassius.

CASSIUS: Don't tell me now. I know all this part of my part. "Well, well, we must reconsider. Well, well, we must reconsider."

BUGS: I never knew what I was supposed to do here, just stand or get out.

HENRY: Write on the blackboard.

CASSIUS: "Well, well, we must reconsider. Well, well, we must reconsider." I tell you it's the walking up and down that tells on you. Oh yes, I've got it. "Playfair, you are your own worst enemy —Playfair, we must reconsider."

Bugs at the board has begun to write Wedoodle. The Old Man comes in.

The OLD MAN: Boys, we're not going to have any more rehearsal this morning. Go along. I want to see Bill Watchman alone for a minute.

BILL: We did pretty well, almost up to the end.

Bugs makes a last dash at his blackboard and joins the others on the way out.

The OLD MAN: Bill, I have a telegram here that will make a great difference in your life and I want you to be a brave boy when you hear the news in it.

BILL: Is it about my father saying good bye? I had a letter and he said "Good bye, good bye, good bye."

The OLD MAN: Yes, he said good bye, because he's gone away on a long long journey. Bill, you are old enough for me to tell you things that other people might tell you later in a cruder form. Your father is dead.

BILL: I knew my father was dead.

The Old Man: How did you know, Bill?

Bill: I just knew he was dead. I never ought to of left home this summer.

The Old Man: Bill, your father took his own life.

Bill: I don't understand what you mean took his own life.

The Old Man: He killed himself.

Bill: Do I have to go home now, or, I mean wherever I'm going?

The Old Man: I don't know yet. Of course you'll stay here till we see what arrangements are going to be made.

Bill: I don't want to go home. I want to stay here forever. I think Mr. Rickey is the most wonderful man in the world. I'd like to be able to dive like him. I know I can never be as great as to be able to do a two and a half or even a one and a half like Mr. Rickey. And I want to be like you too. If I could ever be like Mr. Rickey just once.

The Old Man: Mr. Rickey is a very fine athlete.

Bill: It's like in the play. Sir, can't we just go on with it?

The Old Man: You mean now?

Bill (*passionately*) Yes, now. I don't want to think about my father. Can't we just rehearse now as if nothing had happened and not tell anybody what happened? I won't cry. I knew my father was dead last night.

The Old Man: (*thoughtfully*) Well of course if you think you want to do that—(*He goes to the door and calls.*) Hey, you down there, send those boys back for the festival play, Henry and Bugs and Cassius. (*He goes and puts his arm around Bill's shoulder.*) You like it here, don't you, Bill? And we have been glad having you these four summers. Sometimes you've been your own worst enemy.

Bill: You won't tell any of the rest of them will you?

The Old Man: They'll realize how you feel. No one will say anything to you.

(*Henry, Cassius and Bugs come in.*)

The Old Man: We've decided to go on with the rehearsal. Now let's start from the beginning. All ready?

Cassius takes his place behind the desk.

Cassius: "So, coach, you think we cannot win without Playfair?"

Henry: "It all depends on him, Dr. McDougall. He is our best

pitcher and speed ball delivery artist and say, brother, is he good at the bat. If we are to beat St. Berries we need his services badly."

BUGS: "Out!"

They all look toward him questioningly.

HENRY: What's that?

BUGS: Well, that's the other line I've got that I'm supposed to yell from the window when Playfair makes a triple play.

The OLD MAN: He hasn't made it yet.

BUGS: But I don't know where he's supposed to make it so I thought I'd just say it once in a while.

The OLD MAN: No, Trevellion, that's not the way we work here. We wait till the man is out before we think he's out. Henry, go to the window.

HENRY: Yes, sir.

The OLD MAN: Is Mr. Rickey out in the canoes?

HENRY: Yes, sir, I'm almost sure it's Mr. Rickey.

The OLD MAN: (*sighs*) All right. Now let's go on with the play. Now, Cassius, I don't think you're getting the full effect with the part. Let's begin from the beginning.

CASSIUS: All right, sir. "So, Playfair, you are your own worst enemy."

Bugs has gone to the board and in very small letters is tentatively sketching in Wedoodle. Bill has gone to the side of the stage and straddled a chair leaning his head forward on his arms, his shoulders shaking a little.

The OLD MAN: No. Now it ought to be more like this.

He pushes Cassius out of the way and sits down at the table as the curtain falls.

The Grandstand Complex

by Horace McCoy

Tony Lukatovich had finished the Florida season a few points ahead of me, but I had got them back (with plenty to spare) the first four weeks in Los Angeles. That L. A. track was made to order for me. I had so much confidence in it, and in my jap motor, that after the first week I stopped wearing the steel cap on my left foot and the polo belt I used to protect my abdomen. This made it more dangerous for me in case of a bad spill, but it looked spectacular to the crowds. You have to be a showman to be a success in motorcycle racing. Finally, to live up to the publicity I was getting in the newspapers, and to prove that my winning of last year's national championship was no accident, I discarded my crash helmet, substituting a simple leather helmet such as aviators wear. Everybody said I was a damn fool for doing this. If my head ever smacked the track or the guard-rail at fifty-five or sixty that leather helmet would have been absolutely no protection. My skull would have cracked like an egg shell. I knew that and so did the crowd. The majority came out just to hear somebody's skull crack (you may not think you can hear a skull crack with all those exhausts popping, but you can, you most certainly can) or to see somebody's brains spilled in the dirt, but so far the customers had been disappointed. At the end of the first four weeks I was the big favorite in L. A. I was out in front in individual points, and with the Long Beach team matches coming up, and the national awards but a month away, I looked like a cinch to repeat the championship.

Tony Lukatovich was very jealous of my popularity and you would have thought that every point I collected was a year off his life. He had been the runner-up in the national last year and he had definitely made up his mind he was not going to finish second again. I don't think he wanted the championship title as much as he did the glory that went with it. He was a grandstander, a great grandstander. He was a great rider too, but it was the cheers of the crowd he wanted. These were meat and drink to him. Give him a crowd big enough and let them all root for him and he was the greatest motorcycle racer who ever lived. He would pull turns and

slides and finishes that none of the others of us would even dare think about. In Florida when he was leading in points and was the star attraction, where the crowd was for him to a man, he was a broadsiding maniac. He was more than that; he was a genius.

But the Florida track was short, one-sixth of a mile, and the L. A. track was longer, one-fifth of a mile. Those 72 yards made a difference. On the longer track Tony's judgment, his intuition, was a fraction bad. His timing slipped just enough to keep him from winning consistently.

"It's only your imagination," I told him one day, lying, trying to cheer him up.

"I haven't got any imagination. You're the guy who's got all the imagination. You go to hell," he said.

"All right, if that's the way you feel about it," I said. "I was only trying to help you out."

"I don't need any help from you," he said. "You go to hell."

After that he got nastier and nastier and finally I stopped speaking to him at all. Then he began taking all sorts of reckless chances on the turns and doing trick riding in the home stretch, trying to show up the rest of us. But instead of impressing the crowds with his ability he only gave them the idea that he was a wild man out there trying to kill some of the other riders.

I never did get really sore at him because I knew what was the matter. He simply wanted to become a favorite with the customers and get them pulling for him. He was starving for lack of glory. But the harder he tried the worse he looked. In every race I was knocking his ears down. I was concentrating on piling up all the points I possibly could so that if I had a spill that put me in the hospital I would have enough points to coast to the championship. I didn't expect to go to the hospital; I mean I wasn't looking forward to it, but in motorcycle racing you never can tell, especially when you have a wild man who hates your guts riding behind you.

Tony was trying so desperately to win, was looking so bad, the committee notified him that unless he got back some of his old-time form they would have to give him a handicap. This was like telling Joe Louis that unless he improved they were going to match him with Barney Ross. Tony raved and yelled and screamed and put on an act in front of the stands, challenging the committee to a fight, individually or collectively, kicking up the dirt and throw-

ing his equipment all over the infield. He rushed over to the loudspeaker microphone and was trying to make a speech to the crowd when Jack Gurling, the promoter, collared him and threatened him with a suspension. That cooled Mr. Lukatovich, but I knew from the look of his face that there was blood on the moon.

That night after the races he came over to my room. I invited him in, thinking he probably wanted to talk things over.

"The team races with Long Beach are next week," he said.

"That's right," I said.

"And you and I race again as the No. 1 team?"

"I suppose we do," I said.

"And if we win this time we get permanent possession of the cups?"

"That's right. We've got two legs on 'em now and if we win this time we get permanent possession. Did you get back your cup from your mother?"

Tony always sent all the trophies and cups he won back home to his mother in Ohio, so she could show the neighbors how well he was going.

"No, I didn't," he replied.

"You didn't? Don't you think you ought to get it?"

"I can't," he said. "It would break her heart. She thinks it's mine already."

"It probably will be," I said, "but if we should happen to lose it might be embarrassing for you not to have the cup."

"We won't lose," he said. But I didn't come over here to talk about that. I want to talk about us—you and me."

"Go ahead," I told him.

"Do you think you're a better rider than I am?" he asked.

"How do you think I won the championship last year—with cigarette coupons?"

"You think you are then?"

"I don't think anything about it. I know damn well I am."

"Do you think you've got as much nerve as I have?"

"I wouldn't know much about that. But I've got more skill, which is a damn sight more important."

"All you've got is a swelled head," he said. "Why have you got it in for me?"

"You must be daffy," I said. "I haven't got it in for you. The only trouble with you is you're jealous. As long as you're the fair-

haired boy with the fans and get all the newspaper publicity, everything is roses. The moment somebody else does, you curl up. You can't take it, Tony."

"Is that so?" he said, jumping up, grabbing me by the coat lapel.

"Sit down," I said. He had that blood-on-the-moon look on his face again. "I don't know what's eating you," I said, "but whatever it is, I don't want any part of it. Suppose you beat it."

He said nothing, standing there and looking at me with his eyes glittering.

"Go on, beat it," I said. "Whatever grudges we've got we'll settle out there on the track."

"That's exactly what I want to do," he said. "That's exactly why I came here. I'm going to make you a proposition. I'll see how much nerve you've got."

I knew this was going to be something that was very screwy.

"There's no doubt," he said, "that we're the two best motorcycle racers in the world."

"That's right. I'm the best and you're the second best," I said.

"Okay. We'll make a bet on it."

"You know I don't bet," I said.

"Not money," he said smiling, shaking his head. "Not money. You. Bet yourself."

"I don't get you," I said.

"Your life. You," he said. "You and I race together in the team matches. If you win I'll kill myself. If I win you kill yourself. That'll leave the winner the biggest star in the game."

"Nothing doing," I said.

"Why not? There's nothing new about duels—they've been fighting them for hundreds of years. The other day I read in the paper about a couple of miners in Europe fighting a duel with sledge-hammers. That's all this is—a duel. With motorcycles."

"This is the goofiest thing I ever listened to," I said. "Nothing doing."

"I told you I had more nerve than you did," he said.

"It's not a question of nerve—"

"Oh, yes, it is."

"Oh, no, it's not. It's that grandstand complex of yours. You'd rather be dead than to be second best."

"I'm slowly dying, anyway," he said.

"You go right ahead and die," I told him. "Me, I'm having a fine time living."

"Well, then, it's all settled," he said, turning to go. "Let's shake hands on it," he said, sticking out his hand.

"Why should I shake hands with you?" I asked. "You hate my guts."

"Sure, I do, sure, I do," he said smiling; "but that's got nothing to do with it. Gentlemen always shake hands when they make a bet."

"I haven't made any bet," I said, getting sore.

"Oh, yes, you have. The team race Friday night—the race for life. Whoever loses kills himself."

He stood there smiling, his hand stuck out, waiting for my shake.

"Beat it the hell out of here," I said.

"Is it yes or no?" he asked, not moving.

"Beat it—" I said.

"All right, I'll beat it. But this is going to ruin you. I'm going to spread the word around to everybody, the newspaper reporters and everybody, that you're yellow. I'm going to tell them about the proposition to fight a duel with motorcycles and how you were too yellow to take me up on it because you thought you might lose and have to kill yourself. This'll ruin you."

Suddenly it dawned on me that he was right. This would ruin me. People wouldn't stop to figure it was a screwy proposition, they'd really think I was yellow. Soon they'd have me believing it myself.

"You polack ——— —— — ———," I said, stepping over, hitting him in the face again. He grabbed me, trying to hold on, but I shook him loose and began punching him in the head with my fists. He grabbed me again and we fell over a chair, breaking it, wrestling on the floor. I finally climbed to my feet, dragging him with me, and started punching him in the face some more. Then he grabbed me again, trying to hold on. I got loose and hit him back of the ear and he fell to the floor unconscious, his arms doubled under his stomach.

"Well," my mind said, "you've knocked him out and where did it get you? He's still got that axe over you. The only way to stop whatever is going to happen from actually happening is to cut the guy's tongue out. The minute he starts talking everybody

will think you are yellow and they'll all go over to his side . . . It looks like you'll have to accept the challenge."

"I suppose so," I replied to myself.

"The thing to do," my mind said, "is to win."

"I'll win, all right," I said. "I certainly don't want to have to commit suicide."

I got a wet towel out of the bathroom and rolled Tony over and began rubbing his face and wrists and pretty soon he came to.

"I'm okay," he said, sitting up.

"There's just one thing," I said. "If I do win this race how do I know you won't welsh?"

"Don't worry," he said, pushing himself up off the floor. "I won't welsh and neither will you. We'll shake hands like gentlemen do."

He stuck out his hand. I took it.

"All right, you polack ——— —— -- ———," I said. "Now beat it."

* * *

There was a big crowd out for the team races, many of them coming from Long Beach to back their own riders. There was a lot of money bet on the races this year by the Long Beach fans because our second, third and fourth teams were weaker than usual. The men who had been our No. 2 team last year, and who had won easily, both had been killed on the Florida track. Tony and I looked like cinches to beat our men, but we weren't so sure about the other teams.

About 7:30 that night Tony came in the shed where I was tightening up my chain.

"How do you feel?" he asked. It was the first time he had spoken to me since the fight.

"Swell," I said, "just perfectly—damn swell. How do you feel?"

"I feel fine," he said.

"You won't feel so fine when Gurling finds you," I said. "He's been asking me questions about your cup."

"Look," he said, "everything will be all right if we win. One of us has *got* to win. I told Gurling my mother had mailed the cup but that it just hadn't got here yet."

"Suppose we lose?" I asked.

"We can't lose," he said. "One of us has *got* to win. Not only

for the cup, but for another reason too. Did you keep your dinner down tonight?" he asked, leaning over.

"What was that?" I asked suddenly, turning around, pretending I had heard something. "That was a peculiar noise. Is anybody rattling dice in here? Oh, excuse me," I said, looking at Tony. "It's you."

"Me?" he said, surprised.

"It's your teeth I hear," I said.

"You go to hell," he said, crossing to where his mechanics were checking his motor . . .

The first event on the program was a handicap race for Class B riders, boys who had ridden only a few events. The next event was a four-lap heat, the first three to transfer to Event 7, the handicap semi-finals. I won this race in 1:05:10, pretty good time. The third event was an exhibition by some local trick-riding jockies. Tony was in Event 4, the first three in this also to transfer to Event 7. He won the heat in 1:06 flat. Events 5 and 6 were for novice riders.

Tony and I were the only ones to start from scratch in Event 7, one of the two feature races of the night. This event was run in two heats, the first three in each heat to transfer to the final event, four laps, the points to count towards the national championship.

Tony and I sat in our saddles on the scratch line, saying nothing, six feet apart, while the announcer introduced us. I got the most applause. I looked at Tony, winking.

"It won't be long now," he said, winking back.

"Don't let him get your goat," my mind told me.

"Fat chance," I replied.

The starter's gun popped and my two mechanics shoved. My motor caught on the first shove.

"Good old jap," I said to myself, giving her the gun.

There were two men in front of me. They were both handicap men. One had started from thirty yards ahead of the scratch line and the other from twenty-five. I wasn't much worried about them, they were kids on the way up and I knew I could outgut them in a pinch. But I went right after them anyway, not taking any chances. I trailed them a full lap before I could cut down the handicap and on the back stretch I hung on their tails waiting for a hole at the turn. One of them skidded a little and I shot

through. I trailed the leader down the stretch, but I took him on the front turn and went ahead. In a moment I got a flash out of the corner of my eye and I knew it was Tony making his bid. I hugged the inside railing, hoping he didn't lose his head and crash me. Tony was a maniac when he was desperate. With some riders you can make a close race out of it and give the fans a good finish and a run for their money, but not with Tony. Stay just as far in front of him as you possibly could, was my motto.

I beat him into the finish by a length. I went on around the track and went through the gate into the pits.

There was one other event before the team race—the race that meant the finish for either me or Tony. I had six or seven minutes before we were to go out, so I walked around, trying to tell myself there was nothing to get nervous about. I got a hot dog and a bottle of pop, trying to put my mind on the movies or women or something; anything except what depended on the outcome of the duel. The taste of mustard in the hot dog nauseated me and for a minute I thought I would have to check my dinner. I gagged on the pop, finally throwing it away too.

"What the hell is this?" I asked myself. "Why am I so nervous? I've never been nervous before. I can beat that guy any day in the week."

"Let's go," said one of my mechanics.

"It's not time yet," I said.

"Sure, it is," he said. "The other race is finished. Come on—"

There was more applause when I came out onto the track. Tony and the Long Beach riders were already there, Red Dooley and Paul Jarvis, two top-notchers, not champions yet, but a couple of boys who were getting better every hour. I gave my motor to my mechanics, moving up to the starting line where they were waiting to toss for positions. Tony and I both lost and had to take the second and fourth positions. The Long Beach crowd whooped it up at this.

"Toss for us," Tony said to the starter. "You call it," he said to me.

"Never mind," I said. "You can have two."

"Okay," he said, not even thanking me.

"That was a silly thing to do," my mind said a moment after I had uttered the words. "Why didn't you toss with him? No. 4 is on the outside, the worst position on the track. You've deliberately

put yourself in a hole in the most important race you ever rode in your life."

There was a lot of yelling . . . and then we were off. The others got away first. My motor didn't fire at once.

"Good God!" I thought.

My mechanics shoved again, harder, and this time the motor caught. The others were going into the turn, twenty yards ahead. This was a terrific handicap to give good riders and I knew I was up against it.

I settled down to business, telling myself not to get panicky, and eased into the first turn. But on the back stretch I opened up, swinging high on the outside to keep my goggles from fouling from the dirt the front riders were kicking up. At the turn I dropped down into the slot, figuring Paul Jarvis, just in front of me, would be a little too anxious and would go in a little too fast to hold his line and would therefore slide a little. He did. He left two feet between him and the inside railing and I went through without shutting off. But the impetus carried me to the outside again and I had to shut off and skid to keep from hitting the wall. I laid my left toe on the ground, pulling my motor over at an angle of about thirty degrees. I heard a gasp go up from the stands. I eased my handle-bars over, opening up in the home stretch.

Tony was in second place, a full length behind Dooley. I was still twenty yards back of Tony. I was in a rotten spot. We had three laps left, just three, and I knew I was going to need everything I had to win this race. My motor was all right now that she was rolling—it was the best racing jap in the world. This time it was up to me.

I took the front turn wide open, laying my motor over my left knee, listening for that first faint *whirr* that tells you the traction is slipping. When you hear that you want to get it up in a hurry, else you will have the whole thing suddenly in your lap.

. . . I fought and fought, took chances I had never taken before, used all my skill, all my anticipation, but I was getting nowhere. I had managed to cut off a few yards, but I was not close enough to make my bid. I felt satisfied this was the greatest race I had ever ridden. I would have been in front by the same distance I was now behind if I hadn't lost that one or two seconds getting started.

On the third lap Tony took the back turn wide open, a stupid thing to do, and lost a couple of yards in a slide. I picked up this

much on him, going down the stretch so close that my front wheel almost touched his rear wheel. On the front turn of the last lap Dooley made his first mistake—he hit a patch of soft dirt that he should have spotted before now, and slid across it. It was a very short slide but for an instant his back wheel spun and in that instant Tony and I had pulled up on him. It happened in the tick of a clock.

We went into the back stretch at top speed. Tony knew I was behind him and tried to shake me off, but I held on, hoping he would slide in the turn so I could take him. This was my final chance to win; if it didn't happen I was a gone gosling.

I eased over to the right a trifle to get set for the jump. Dooley was swinging wide now, trying to play safe, and I saw Tony follow him over.

"He's crazy to take a chance like that," I thought.

Just then Tony's front wheel hit Dooley's rear wheel and both motors went over, riders and all. One of the wheels struck the concrete guard rail, leaving a shower of sparks. Suddenly, the sky filled with flame. It was right in front of me.

"Good God, I'm going to pile up!" I thought, twisting my handle-bars over, turning my head so the crash wouldn't put out my eyes . . . My motor twisted and kicked and I had that awful cold feeling in the bowels that a man gets when he realizes the thing he is riding is suddenly out of control . . . Then my wheels gripped and I righted myself and saw the starter in front of me waving the checkered flag, the winner's flag, giving the signal to me.

"Can I drop you some place?" a reporter asked, coming out of the morgue with me.

"No, thanks," I said.

"Too bad about Tony," he said. "Jesus, there wasn't much left of his face, was there? Those spokes are as bad as a meat grinder."

I looked at him steadily, trying to focus my eyes on him, but not being able to.

"Tony called me up just this afternoon," he said. "It's a funny thing, but he had a hunch something like this was going to happen."

"He did?" I said.

"Yes," the reporter said. "It was a good story. I used it as a

feature in the bull-dog. It's out now. Read it. As a matter of fact, it was written especially for you."

"I'll get it," I said.

"Well . . . you sure I can't drop you some place?"

"I think I'll walk around a little," I said.

At the corner I was stopped by the traffic light. There was a stack of morning papers piled up by the lamp-post. Two Die In Motorcycle Race, the headline said. Tony Lukatovich and Red Dooley killed in Long Beach-L. A. Team Match . . . I stopped, looking down at the paper. Motorcycle Champion Resigns Career After Fatal Smash; Vows He Will Never Race Again, said a heading.

"I didn't say that," I said to myself, trying to figure the whole thing out. The next moment I knew what the reporter meant. "My God!" I said to myself, turning the corner, walking down the street very fast . . .

The Lord's Day

by Charles Grayson

The excitement awakened him like a real feeling. It was early; too early to be getting up—dark and cold. He sank down a little inside himself, remembering that it was Sunday and the day. Better maybe to stay home, like always. It was warm here, comfortable, nothing to lose. He thought of the morning wind blowing its chill breath off the Gulf. Would El Diablo be cold in his coop? He threw back his blanket and stood up.

Working into his pants and shirt, careful of the labored rasp of his mother's breathing in the next room, he carried his shoes outside. They were almost gone, and they had cost three times the price of sandals. But he never would go back to sandals. Not after shoes. Never! Perhaps today would give him a new pair. Today and El Diablo.

Rising, he crossed the packed floor of the small yard to the pen which pulled out one of its corners. It was empty. The door of the coop which centered it looked like an old black mouth. Unlatching the gate, he moved into the pen as he had moved so as not to awaken his sick mother. He squatted down before the door of the coop, struck a match and looked inside.

The two glowing points regarded him steadily, vehemently, impersonally. Manuel crossed himself. Dios, what an eye that one had! "Feel good?" he asked. "Today—soon we go." El Diablo did not relinquish his stare. The match burned out against Manuel's fingers. He stood up, feeling bigger and stronger and braver, and went to the house.

From the box beneath his bed he took his pig. It was chill and satisfyingly heavy in his hand. He dared to clink it. Five, six pesos, maybe more. For months now that long slit along its clay back had absorbed every centavo he could manage. Now for its use. What good were a few cents here and there? One got past the needs they might have helped. But made many times themselves, those centavos became important—shoes, a good reel. Maybe even —his heart charged up at the dazzling thought . . . a bicycle!

Yet even as he hefted the pig, telling over like the beads of a

rosary the gifts it might bring him, he was knowing in the back of his mind where his winnings would go if El Diablo had it this afternoon in Merida. That troubled sound from the next room—she knew, just as he did . . . and his promise of a mass for her must be kept, somehow.

For a minute he stood thinking about going in to her—to awaken her and tell her everything, about El Diablo and the pig, and to ask for her blessing before he started. But the gamecock's eyes got between him and his weakness. Sitting out there in the dark and cold, not afraid or asleep, ready to fight and fight and fight and put the fight into all who watched, to make you see that you must go on and keep going and never back and down so long as you could stand up and fight—Eh, to learn so from a chicken!

From under the house he got the basket he had prepared and hurried back to the pen. There he broke open the pig. He counted the money, frowning. Less than four pesos. Not enough. Wrapping the coins in his handkerchief, he went in for El Diablo.

It gave him a fine feeling to be able to reach in the coop and take the cock from his perch. Anyone else would have had his hands gone over. El Diablo did not complain when Manuel put him in the basket. His flat snakelike head turned and his hot eyes looked up, asking. The chills went around Manuel's shoulders. He stroked the hard feathered back, murmuring:

"Yes, today—the day I tell you of for so long—that I know you are ready for when you take off those sillies of old Rivas—today you must win for the mass of the little madre . . ."

Light was cracking up the grey plain of the sky. He covered the basket carefully and went on down the road. It still was too early for Progresso to be moving; the low white houses were as tombs for the dead. But it was over a score of miles to Merida, and he wanted to get there early. El Diablo had never been anywhere before, except over to the barn of Guillermo Deloya, where he had gone so well. It was best that they get to the city as early as possible, so if the trip made him nervous he would be all right before the main, at four o'clock.

The road to the highway led past the barn of old Rivas, stuffed with gamecocks of every known breed. There were cracks of light along its seams. Getting ready in there for Merida. Manuel hurried. Old Rivas' hate terrified him some; he never had had anyone hate him before. It was a matter of laughter—that which a Yuca-

teco, so proud, never could stand. But whose fault had it been, eh?

He knew now that the *patron* had tried to cheat him, to take advantage of his love for gamecocks by giving him a little unpromising chick instead of money for cleaning up around the place. "He wants to be a cocker, our Manuel," the old man had said to the hangers-around. "Perhaps I should give him this *diablo* instead of dead things like pesos. Eh, my friends?"

His friends had said yes, uproariously, and the ugly chick they called devil in jest had been shoved into Manuel's hands—to make a fool of him because he was a boy and passion in a boy was something to be laughed at. But before he could throw the chick back with a curse into Rivas' face, something like the light cut of a whip had stung up his arms from the tough little body in his hands. He had looked down at it and that flat gaze had looked back at him. He closed his mouth and held onto the fowl.

That had been the months ago which had seen the chick develop into the fury he had been in the barn of Guillermo Deloya. As from the first Manuel had been sure would be so. True, he had fed the growing stag carefully, trained and exercised him with almost Mexican patience; but it was not that. The little devil could and would go. As everyone in the barn of Guillermo Deloya had known when he had killed one of the poor birds of old Rivas, and then a good one. To what snickers at the expense of Rivas—and what hate, like the stare of a gamecock itself from out of those deep bright eyes!

The highway to Merida cut suddenly across the road. The first truck he thumbed stopped. The driver was out of Progresso with fish for the city's market. It was a good omen that a man so in a hurry would stop. Manuel smiled. The day was starting right!

The driver was gay. His boat had been the first in and with a fine catch. A huge mess of rubia, many of the so-popular pompano, and best of all a large guango. Would Manuel like a couple of fish for his basket?

This was no market basket, Manuel answered curtly. It contained his gamecock, El Diablo, who was to take part in the afternoon's main at Merida. The man nodded, but became less friendly. It seemed he was a little resentful to have as a passenger one who was up early to go to a cockfight when he was up early to carry fish. The truck rumbled under their feet.

At the market the driver, in with the first fish, was popular.

He sold his load quickly, and became friendly again. Now to Marentes, he let it be known like a cat licking its face, where there was a new girl from Vera Cruz. Nice and fat, good for a morning like this!

He was the sport now. Manuel could see him thinking, and himself just a boy standing around on stiff legs with no warm bed or fat girl to go to. Manuel hunched up to seem smaller, putting on a sad look. It worked. The driver gave him a peso.

"Here, put this on the fellow in the basket. We will divide what it wins. My name is Juan Gonzales, at the wharf they will tell you. *Hasta luego.*"

Manuel went down the alley to the feed store of Señor Salazar, hugging himself. Almost five pesos, now, and the hunch getting more alive all the time! He hoped the new girl from Vera Cruz was not sick.

Señor Salazar, who looked like a grain sack that had been leaking, nodded sourly to the great smile Manuel brought through the door. Manuel bought only the meagerest packages of feed, but little cockers increased, sometimes, to become important ones. He pointed at the basket.

"Is that your famous one?"

"Yes—El Diablo—who has grown so strong on your excellent grain, Señor. See, has he not become a fine fellow?"

Stripping back the coverings, he took El Diablo from the basket and placed him on a bench. As the shopkeeper reached toward him the flat head reared slightly. The hand of Señor Salazar stopped. "Eh!" he said in a voice of mild surprise.

"He does not like anyone but me to touch him," Manuel said, trying not to show his pride. "And now, as you said I might—the coop out back for him until this afternoon?"

In the pen El Diablo stretched himself leisurely, walked around, took a drink of water. Then, eyeing the two figures squatting on the other side of the mesh, he fluttered, quieted, jumped up on a perch and composed himself to rest.

"I give you twenty pesos for him," said Señor Salazar.

Resolutely Manuel shook his head. "He is not for sale, Señor. I have the hunch today he goes."

"You are a fool boy. He will be killed and you will have nothing."

"I will have something you would like to know about," Manuel

said, grinning at him. "I heard about her this morning. New here, and fat." Before the shopkeeper could ask it as a favor, he stated the price of his information: "A pair of gaffs—your best. . . . Oh, yes! Do I not pay for every bit of grain I take from this store? Do I not tell you of the hunch, so that your twenty pesos may grow, if you bet? The gaffs, Señor Salazar, and then you may get there before anyone else knows!"

Later, in the park, he took the new gaffs from his pocket and examined them for any minute flaw he might have missed in the shop. But they were as fierce and as perfect as the eagle which once had carried them as spurs. The thunder of bells broke above the trees. He stood up immediately and went toward the cathedral.

What luck to have it here for this day! In all the world there could be no church like this, built over the ruins of NaChan Caan. In Mexico City, they said, there was one so big you could get lost in it. But the Mexicans were liars as well as dirty; and who would trade just bigness for a cathedral which stood where a Mayan temple once had been?

The ten o'clock mass was the most popular, with the women coming directly to it from their bargaining in the markets. This was better. He could be alone at the shrine of St. Benedict to ask for a blessing on the new gaffs, the almost five pesos, the new girl from Vera Cruz, and for El Diablo—especially for El Diablo.

As he placed his candle, he thought the face of the saint looked at him kindly from the painted niche of the shrine. He put another coin in the box as he went out the great doors. Now the sun was sticking its big hot face into the cool blue sky. Good sun, good friend—would it warm Progresso and stop the little madre's cough! He must eat now; she would ask at once if he had neglected his food when he was back home.

At a sidewalk cafe he got his coffee and a cozito. The old woman packed the tortilla extra heavy and showed her empty gums at him when, with his own sound teeth tearing at the venison, he shook his shoulders a little with happiness.

A party of North Americans, *touristas*, came across the park and started up the cathedral steps. Short pants hung from the bellies of the men. They waved cigars and talked loud. The ugly pale women acted silly and stared like they never had seen anything before. Their jaws worked like those of a cow. Manuel turned

his back on them, winking at the old woman. Chuckling, she refilled his coffee mug.

In the park he found a warm bench. The good heat of the sun came in to mingle with the good feeling inside him and he slept.

When he awoke the shadows were pools at the base of the trees, hiding under the benches. Many people were promenading along the paths, dressed for Sunday. He pushed in a vagrant tail of his shirt. His linen pants were clean, of course. He hesitated, then called a bootblack and had his shoes shined. They looked nice, but now he had only four pesos. That must be helped. He struck off rapidly toward the baseball.

He did not understand very well the baseball, growing all the time more popular in Yucatan. But there were not corridas often in Merida, even with the great new bullring, and so the silly game of the North Americans was coming to get the crowds—far bigger ones than the cockfights. Spitting contemptuously through his teeth, he joined the crowd around the rude diamond.

He watched with small interest until a short wiry man with an Indian face showing wrong above his uniform caught his attention. In his smooth quick movements he was like El Diablo. When he next came to bat there was the hunch.

"A peso he gets the hit," he said generally.

Four of them gave him pesos and remained standing beside him, trying to cover up their grins. But Manuel paid no attention. He had the hunch—

The thrower—how different from the grace of an espada!—bent himself up and let the ball fly. It thudded into the big glove of the man behind the man of his faith. Again the same. The third time the stick on his shoulder flashed out like the head of El Diablo. There was a crack. The ball went away like a grey line. Manuel put the plump handful of silver in his pocket.

"Gracias, señores," he said walking away. Eight pesos!

The shop of Señor Salazar was still locked when he returned. He went around back, climbed over the fence and dropped before the pen. El Diablo looked at him with the perfect calm of readiness. His body was hot and tense beneath his feathers as Manuel took him from the coop and put him in the basket.

He walked slowly to the street of the battered walls which held the cockpit. The secretary, book in hand, was talking to a group of men. Manuel took a breath and walked up to him.

"I wish to enter El Diablo."

A circle of eyes looked at him: empty, amused, annoyed, mocking. He could feel the red coming up out of his collar, and gave way. "He is from the shop of Señor Salazar."

"Oh, José. Very well. You have the two pesos?"

Manuel paid over the entrance fee, shamed by his defection in a way he never had been shamed before. But the men now were taking no notice of him. The secretary had his entry weighed and assigned to a place in the handler's shed. Despite the cries of the other cocks, El Diablo made no demonstration. He sat calmly on his perch—but his comb had become bright as blood. Manuel watched him, taking in one of the lessons of his life.

He too tried to be patient and aloof; but with the filling of the seats and the sound of the crowd, the fever which had taken him when he had seen his first main in the barn of Guillermo Deloya began to sing in him like the electricity wires.

From his pockets he took the new gaffs, a bit of sealing wax and some matches, a length of ribbon. Heating the wax he applied it to the stubs of El Diablo's cut-off spurs, then slipped the gaffs snugly over them. When the weapons had hardened in place, he affixed them even more tightly with close bindings of the ribbon. As a finishing refinement he rubbed beeswax over the cloth to make it slick. El Diablo now was spurred like an eagle.

A handler entered the shed, cursing. He carried a dying fowl. "That Rivas—those ill-begotten snake-headed devils of his—and today he has half the card—"

Half the card! That would mean El Diablo must go up against a good one—Rivas would bring only his best birds here from Progresso—and that he, Manuel, again must face the cold enmity of his neighbor. His courage faltered again, as it had with the secretary, and he said:

"Señor, I wonder—the Señor Salazar has not come—might you care to handle El Diablo in his fight against the Rivas?"

The man looked at him quickly, frowning. He started to say something sharp; then his eyes met those of El Diablo and he started a little, as Salazar had done. Silently he reached for the fowl. El Diablo made no protest. It seemed to Manuel the cock knew that this time strange hands had a purpose on him, something to do with what he lived for, and he submitted patiently as the man tossed him, checked his gaffs, comb and under-wings.

Finished, the handler seemed impressed; not by the results of the routine going-over, but by the venomous glances with which El Diablo paid him. "He has the look of one of those fiends of old Rivas."

When Manuel confirmed the guess his lips drew back. "Fire with fire—perhaps yet we may spoil the old one's fun!"

Tradition was against the hope when their call came. Rivas' birds had gone down their side of the card like a feathered scythe. When El Diablo appeared for his fight three to one were being laid against him.

Old Rivas stared as Manuel followed the handler into the ring. "So it is your—our—Diablo," he said. "Well, better an ugly one like that soon is out of sight."

Anger went flaming up to the start of Manuel's hair. "Here is five pesos at the odds that it is not El Diablo who goes out of sight."

Rivas took the money, saying: "Four to one for you, muchacho" as he turned away.

His palms sweating, Manuel stepped back over the wall into the crowd. A man slid over and he sat down. His back was being tattooed by nerves as by needles. Oh, to be big and rich and old!

As the birds were weighed again and their gaffs measured, the air thickened with the cries of bettors. Gradually the odds increased on El Diablo as the smart money followed Rivas' reputation. Manuel gripped his remaining peso. This was for the handler; but the hunch was hot within him again, and he gave it to a man beside him who was crying five for one. Now if he lost, he lost everything. . . .

He tried looking around—at the straining shouting faces of the crowd, the green branchings of the trees at the open end of the shed, the corrugations of the tin roof—but his gaze determinedly kept coming back to the red earth of the ring. It held him like a crimson magnet. His examination finished, the judge nodded and climbed over the blood-spattered barrier. The handlers, holding their charges, drew close, stood face to face.

The grey Rivas cock drove its beak viciously, El Diablo countered with a double stroke, like light, plunged against the restraining grip. It was obvious that this pair did not need to be aroused. The handlers set them down and drew back, quickly.

The grey fowl shuffled. El Diablo came to him instantly, death wrapped up in furious feathers. They joined in the exact middle of the ring, so hard that first blood stung the pink stucco of the low

fence. Manuel's heart stopped, then lifted as to great music when he saw that it was the grey that was hung. His Diablo, his mighty one!

The birds were disengaged. The judge reversed his sand glass. But after a quick examination old Rivas ordered his handler to pit his entry again. El Diablo was struggling frantically to free himself from the hands which held him. The odds had dropped like a rock.

The judge called sharp above the tumult, and the fowls were released. The grey stag came out running, short wings spread. It hit El Diablo, breast-on, with a shock that sent up a little drift of feathers as an echo. El Diablo bounded like a ball and was in the air, his legs working like pistons. As he landed on the grey their two bodies merged in a hectic immediate tangle.

Manuel sat as though held in a vise, before his extended gaze passing the hot kaleidoscope of thrashing bodies, beaks which tore at clipped combs, lashing spurs. The break came suddenly. There was, all at once, an almost shocking pause while the opponents drew off to survey each other, glaring. Then, and so swiftly visions numbed with violent jumbled action scarcely could accommodate the sight, El Diablo ruffled and struck.

"He is hung!—hung!—the Rivas is hung!"

"Three to one he is killed—four!—five!"

The Rivas handler was looking at his employer. But the veteran cocker, his face fixed as the wall behind which he sat, gave no signal. His string won or died. Manuel felt a little proud that they both were from Progresso. He looked back to see El Diablo himself tear out the gaff and hit the grey stag again.

Now, with victory coming on, El Diablo's actions began to contain more madness than effect. His inexperience poised him in dreadful indecision between a choice of pleasures; to dig out the hated eyes which glared their hate back at him, to hack more deliciously at the dripping loathed head, to sink his gaffs again and again and deeper in the detested body which surged beneath his.

Yet even with his attack thus divided his purpose had murder in it. Slowly the Rivas fowl sank to the red, reddening earth. It tried to get weapons up for a last counter, and as it failed it died —with a quick clean shudder, as though angrily shucking off a life incapable of answering its will. Above the stained grey bundle El Diablo lifted his fiery head to give a hoarse triumphant cry. The

handler picked him up, spat water over his crest and took him from the ring.

The man beside Manuel looked astonished, paying over his loss. "A devil," he said. "But a good devil. Next time I have him." Feeling a foot taller, Manuel stepped over the wall.

Old Rivas said nothing, giving him twenty-five pesos. In his eyes was the same reptilian stare as the day he had lost in the barn of Guillermo Deloya. But suddenly Manuel recognized his manner for what it was—the hatred of one established for one coming up with the same thing, perhaps with something a bit better. He felt even bigger, going out to the shed.

There, the handler was checking El Diablo minutely, cleansing the single cut which had been the cock's fee for the ecstasy of all that tumultuous combat. Manuel held out three pesos. "I thank you, Señor, and if you will do me the favor of accepting—"

"*Por nada,*" the man stopped him with a short gesture. He smiled, stroking El Diablo. "You made a mistake, my young friend, I am not one of the handlers—just a breeder."

"Oh, but Señor—!"

"*Por nada!* I liked the looks of your fellow, enjoyed myself. And now perhaps you might care to sell him to me—a hundred pesos?"

For an instant pride shot up within Manuel rocket-like; then, as suddenly, the descent. With his great need, a hundred pesos was an offer he could not refuse, even though it took part of his life away. "All right, Señor," he said.

The man took out a wallet and paid him in new slick bills. It was cleaner money than any Manuel ever had seen, but he put it hastily in his pocket. Picking up his basket he went quickly out into the street. Not for twice a hundred pesos could he have said goodbye to El Diablo. The voice of the crowd, busy with the next fight, bubbled inside the fence. He walked quickly down the sidewalk.

Dusk was coming down, sifting gently like heavy smoke. The sun that had made him feel so good now was lying down tired on the edge of the world. He must hurry. It was twenty-six miles back to Progresso, and the little madre would worry. Yet how happy she would be when he told her of all the money. One hundred and twenty-five and six one hundred and thirty-one pesos! He tried to swallow the harsh pain in his throat.

The little madre would have her mass—and for himself there

would be new shoes, and the reel, and the bicycle! All of them, when this morning he had hoped, at most, but for one! Such a day—he should be so happy. He was being ungrateful to the good St. Benedict—

Yet these were stronger than anything he could summon: the horrible mocking lightness of the basket, the clumsy lump of Judas money in his pocket, the knowing that in his victory he had lost forever the friend who could make him feel six feet tall and tough enough for anything. Sold him—sold him like a pullet for the pot—his wonderful Diablo . . . gone . . . gone . . .

Then the ache in his throat was too much, and his clenched fists fought at the tears which are the meagre solace of the weak and the poor and the young.

The Come-Back

by L. A. G. Strong

Ted Lenehan's second came into the dressing room, smiled, and jerked his head infinitesimally backwards over his shoulder. Ted returned the smile, but did not rise. He had heard through the closed door the roar announcing the premature close of the last bout. He sat forward, muscles relaxed.

"Plenty o' time," said his second unnecessarily. "Let 'im get in first."

Ted nodded, and stared straight in front of him. To sit with loose muscles, enjoying to the last second the time of rest, was a pleasure he had learned to savour to the full. It helped to keep his mind empty. It almost helped him to forget how nervous he was, how little he looked forward to the next half-hour. (Maybe quarter of an hour would be enough.) Slowly, keeping complete command of himself, he raised his right hand and inspected the bandages. Go on, he told himself. What's wrong? You're an old bird. You know the game.

Ted Lenehan had had a curious career. He was twenty-seven years old, and had been in the ring for nine of them. A provincial fighter, he had scrapped his way along for years without attracting any special attention, or gaining anything except experience and a considerable skill in taking care of himself. Then a lucky knock-out win had opened up new possibilities. He withdrew from actual fighting, managed to get taken on as sparring partner to a fighter of class, worked hard, and came back to the ring a year later. An immediate defeat almost upset him for good, but he tried again, won by a knock-out, got a better match, and won by a knock-out again. Filled with new confidence, he got down to the business in real earnest, and a series of knock-out victories put him on the edge of the map. Promoters in the big towns began to ask questions. His price rose. There were more engagements as sparring partner. He was invited to go abroad. Then luck took a hand. The welter division was having a thin time. There was not a single first-class man in it. The champion, an unsatisfactory fellow, dodged and twisted until the Board declared his title forfeit, and instituted a series of elimi-

nation contests to pick his successor. Ted, on the strength of rumour, was included in these. He rose to the occasion, and beat his man—just. Next came the semi-final, held in the biggest hall and the best town Ted had ever visited professionally. Up against a showy veteran, a navy boxer who was all tricks and tattoo-marks, Ted had boxed a couple of respectful rounds, and then, just as the audience was getting restive, went in suddenly and knocked his man cold.

Then came the final. It was a question which of the two small-town boxers was the more miserably apprehensive as they met under the big lights at the Albert Hall; but, after several scrambling rounds Ted once more found his pet punch, and, gazing down at his squirming opponent, incredulously heard himself proclaimed the new welterweight champion.

That was over a year ago. And here he was now, out in the provinces again, making a come-back, not against defeat, but against illness. A bare fortnight after winning the championship, he was rushed into a hospital with a perforated appendix. The Board was kind. They held his title in abeyance until he should recover. But recovery was a long, slow business. It was months before he felt anywhere near fit again. The Board grew impatient. At last, very carefully, after a long preparation in the gymnasium, Ted's manager began trying him out with a series of easy fights in the provinces. This was the third of the easy fights. There was only one more, and then, inexorable, the date, two months ahead, on which he must defend his title.

It was worth defending. Ted had a nice voice, and his good-looking, alert face bore no sign of his profession. The championship had brought film and music-hall offers—nothing fabulous, but still, possibilities of a kind of which he had never dreamed. If he could only hold on to the title for a bit, they were his, at any rate for some months ahead. He *must* hold on—that was all there was about it.

Ted's second, who had been standing by, raised an eyebrow. Ted rose languidly, passed his tongue over his upper lip, and went through the door. He was scared, badly scared, and there was no use denying it. He hated these "easy" fights worse than any others. True, he had won the first two, but that was little help. Merely winning was no good. He was expected to win easily, spectacularly; and the men he was up against, with everything to gain and nothing to lose, fought their damnedest. Ted had no illusions about himself.

He was a weak champion, at the best of times. His ring assets were experience; an excellent sense of balance, which enabled him to avoid blows and gave the maximum of effect to those he landed; and a right hand punch. His defects, both physical and psychological, were serious. He suffered from over-much imagination, a bad left hand, lack of real aggression, and—intensified by his illness—an inability to take punishment. A good punch downstairs, and he was done. He had had ample reminder of these defects in the two preliminary fights just over, and even more alarming evidence of a new one, lack of stamina. In his present state, he could never last ten rounds, even if he were winning. His only chance was to secure a knock-out, early on. If he couldn't get one—well, there were ways out; ways to which, unfortunately, he was not altogether a stranger. That was one comfort. As he came down the aisle towards the glare of the ring; he reminded himself of it, and felt a faint glow of reassurance. He did know the ring; and, in those two first fights, that knowledge, like an instinct, had come up, independent of his fear-stricken mind, and fought mechanically in his defense. It was there, thank the Lord, under his skin, in the core of his muscles. Even if he were nervous and weak as a cat, it could be relied on to take charge and tell him what to do. As long as he, personally, remained inert, and surrendered himself to its guidance, he would be all right.

He was in the ring, the lights gleaming on his rich silk dressing gown, turning this way and that, holding up his clasped hands, acknowledging the respectful, unconvinced applause. Then, from his corner, he took a look at his opponent. Fair, thick-set, shortish, young, he sat, listening to the urgent voice of his chief second, nodding every now and then, a look of secret determination in his eye. Yes, thought Ted, nod away, you—! You're all right. You've nothing to lose, you haven't. You've nothing to worry about. No wife and children, no title, no film contracts, no nothing.

A moment later the referee was calling the men together. The gloves lay on a cloth in the center of the ring. The referee stood beside it. He said the usual things. Ted hardly listened, and the other man, still with the hypnotized, secret look in his eyes, nodded and cleared his throat.

"Understand?"

The referee, having said his piece, looked brightly from one to the other, like a bird.

Ted nodded. The other said hoarsely "Yes," and cleared his throat again.

"Shake hands now, and come out fighting. Shake!"

They shook hands. Ted smiled with sudden mindless goodwill, but the other, full of his secret determination, looked down and would not meet his eye.

They went back to their corners. The dressing gown was peeled from Ted's arms, and slipped loosely over his shoulders. He sat to have the gloves tied on. His second passed him the bottle. He tilted back his head, rinsed his dry mouth, and spat the water sideways into a bucket. He breathed hard once or twice through his nose, and sat forward. Then, clearing his mind, he took stock of his opponent.

Yes. As he had expected. Solid, heavy muscled, and a good stone and a half the heavier. Since his illness, Ted was still badly underweight. He had hopped on the scales that afternoon in his clothes. They had joked with him over it. What they did not know was that he had a sizeable lead weight in each trouser pocket. He dared not let it be known how light he was. If he had been asked why, instead of giving away weight he could ill afford, he did not take advantage of his lightness and fight in the division below, his answer would have been quick and decisive. The champion in the lower division was a real champion, capable of beating Ted Lenehan. Ted's only chance of a championship and all it promised to bring lay in staying in the welters. It was precarious enough. Even if he got back, at any moment a youngster might arise who had the real stuff, and topple him down again.

"Seconds out! First Round! Time!"

The gown was slipped from his shoulders: he rose, and came out into the ring. The signal had taken him unawares. He approached his man without preparation or thought—and was instantly occupied in parrying a first clumsy, nervous rush. Automatically he slipped the blows, frowning as one caught him on the wrist and momentarily hurt him. His heart was beating very fast, but after half a minute of scrambling, quick exchanges a glow of thankfulness arose in him.

Aha! The other chap was settling down. That first rush had been nine-tenths nervousness. Now, after a minute's fighting, he was gaining command of himself. He came in strongly. With a series of stiff lefts, Ted kept him off. He frowned involuntarily. The jar of the blows, the strength with which the fellow bore against him

in the clinches, told an unwelcome story. The chap was too strong —too strong, and too tough. The way he had taken that last left, just shaking his head, and coming in harder than ever—Ted didn't like it. He could not go many rounds against that sort of thing.

As if to ram the message home, the other chap bored in and landed an unpleasantly vigorous thump in Ted's ribs. Something would have to be done.

There was no use in hurrying, though. Fighting cleverly on the retreat, Ted led him on. He came, plunging and blowing. The floor shook beneath his stamping feet. It must be near the end of the round. Ted swayed back, led him on, swayed back; landed a left —and another—but it was not hard enough to keep him out, and they were in a clinch, Ted being borne backwards, when the bell rang.

Bellows of encouragement to the local man at once arose from the crowd. Ted sat in his corner. He had done all right from the spectators' point of view. No one but himself could know that his left was already aching with the effort of keeping his heavy opponent off.

"*What's* the chap's name?" he asked, interrupting his second's flow of advice.

"Bill Stammers."

Bill came up confidently for the second round. He rushed in at once, and Ted let him rush, giving ground, swaying away, proving exceedingly hard to hit. He now knew one important thing about Bill. Like himself, he was a right-hand fighter. Every move, every clumsy attempt at strategy, the very carriage of his shoulders, betrayed the man who had a powerful punch in his right and was waiting for a chance to use it. The issue was clear. Unfit though he was, and risky though the process must be, he must draw that right—lure Bill on to use it—and, when it came, be, not somewhere else—that would be easy—but near enough to take full advantage. With his eye fixed on a point somewhere to the left of Bill, he fought on coolly, anticipating each blow from the movements of the stamping feet.

Then, suddenly, his first chance came. Bill, breathless from his efforts, for an instant stopped still. Immediately, so lightly and gracefully that it seemed child's play, Ted feinted, went in, and landed an academically perfect left hook to the jaw. It was so simple, so insolent, that a gasp went up, and a ripple of delighted ap-

plause. There was no force behind the blow: Ted's left was weak anyhow, and from that position he could put no weight into a hook: it was pure artistry, pure eyewash. Recovering with a snort, Bill came in—and a few seconds afterwards, with the same nonchalance, Ted leaned forward and did it again. This time there was a loud laugh. Bill fell back, and flushed darkly. Like a cat Ted was after him, sending a hail of quick, light blows to head and ribs, and dancing away out of reach. He kept moving till close on the end of the round, and then, a few seconds before the bell, his whole soul sick with the exquisite daring, he landed the hook for the third time. A howl of laughter went up, and, as he leaped back, Ted saw in his opponent's eye the gleam he wanted. The slow mind was at work at last.

Sure enough, in the interval, he saw an earnest confabulation going on in Bill's corner. His seconds were telling him something. The broad face was alight with malevolence and secret purpose.

As the seat was pulled away, Ted came out with a show of the completest confidence, and landed a couple of quick light lefts to the face. Bill hung back. *That* was all right! Now Ted knew for certain what was afoot. Maneuvering him into a nice position, he made the identical feint, as if to land the hook for a fourth time. It even started on its course: and then, like a film that suddenly stops, the movement was arrested—just as Bill let off a savage right uppercut which, had Ted been leaning in for the hook, would have lifted him a foot off the floor. As it was, it whizzed harmlessly upward, so close that he felt the wind of it on his skin. Then, at the precise instant when, meeting nothing, the right shot up too far, tilting Bill backward, jerking taut the muscles on his stomach, Ted, with every vicious ounce that was in him, shot his own right into the stretched, unprotected gap.

Bill gave a loud grunt. His head jerked forward; he staggered back, half doubled up. Swift and merciless, Ted was after him. He smashed a right at the unguarded jaw, missed the fatal spot, but, to judge by the shock that thrilled up his arm, got home pretty hard on something. Then, his opponent on the ropes, he coolly, desperately drove in blows with every atom of science and strength he had, spending his strength prodigally in the effort to follow up his advantage.

For a few seconds Bill, still suffering from the punch amidships, found no defence from the blows that came at him cruelly, venom-

ously, from all points of the compass. Then, his senses clearing, he started lashing out. Intent upon his murderous work, Ted took a couple of wild blows. Realizing his folly, he leaped back, before any real harm was done. To his amazement (instead of thankfully grasping the chance to rest), Bill followed him up at once. Shaking his head, he charged in, and in a couple of seconds was fighting back as strongly as ever. Ted's heart went chill with dismay. He had put all he knew behind those punches, and the man hadn't even gone down. That smack in the guts alone would have put most men down for the full count.

Recovering himself quickly, for the crowd were bawling encouragement to Bill, Ted countered, side-stepped, slipped, and for the rest of the round appeared to dominate the fight and do what he liked. It was an expenditure of valuable strength, but the moment was critical: he had his name to think of. He went to his corner with a smile and a nonchalant swagger, but tired and breathing hard.

"You damn near 'ad 'im. Fetch 'im another one in the guts, like that, and 'e'll be done."

Ted didn't think so. Yet—maybe a looker-on saw most of the game, after all. Even though he didn't go down, Bill must have felt that smack all right. He might be bluffing, too. That recovery might have been so much eyewash. Ted would have liked to believe it. A wave of weariness swept over him, weariness with the whole game. Bitterly he envied those whose living was not a series of ordeals which frayed their nerves to rags.

He realized, with chill conviction, that, bar an extraordinary stroke of luck, he could not put this chap away. He had hit him all he knew, and the cove seemed to like it. He, Ted, was already the more tired of the two. Well—he must keep Bill off for the rest of the time—if he could—and look as if he were doing enough to win. And, with cold, merciless accents, a voice inside him said, "This fight ought to have been finished already."

The bell went, and with a lightness he did not feel Ted came out. Bill, full of valour, rushed in. A stiff left jerked his head back, but he recovered before Ted could follow it up. Ted blocked a couple of well-advertised leads, the second so naïve that it made him smile; then, catching Bill off his balance, went in and once more gave him the left hook. Bill scowled murderously, and replied with a swing that missed by a couple of feet. The crowd, in high good

humor, shouted jocular advice, till the M. C. half rose, and roared for order.

Quiet, vicious, Bill followed Ted around the ring. Showing off, with widespread hands, Ted invited him to lead. Dull cunning gleamed in Bill's small eyes; he would not accept so obvious a bait. But his second, wiser, old in sin, was frantically beckoning him on. Go after him, said the gestures. Ted saw them, and smiled. The man knew how it was with him. The recognition made Ted almost gay. The fool opposite could not be got to believe it; he would not take the advice. With sudden irritation at his folly, Ted feinted, and dug him viciously in the ribs. Too late, he realized his mistake. Bill was in upon him, and Ted took a jab that made him wince and catch his breath before he could gain control. Then, with an eye raised at the referee, he leaned on Bill and waited for the referee to part them.

They were pushed apart, and Bill fell back at once. His second, who had seen and was not deceived, rose and beckoned him on in agony.

"Sit down, that man."

The second, his scarred mug a map of conflicting emotions, reluctantly subsided. Something of his urgency must, however, have penetrated Bill's thick skull. Taking a deep breath, he came on in. On the hair-trigger of poise, with a twist of his body, Ted beautifully evaded his rush. A regular game followed, Ted, with a faint smile, side-stepping rush after rush, without striking a blow. He worked round the ring, and finally let himself appear to be maneuvered into a corner. Then, as with a glint in his eye Bill charged. By magic there was no one there to meet him, and he rushed into the ropes. Turning furiously, lashing out on chance, he missed, and received a stinging blow from a place where he had never expected Ted to be. Quickly, showily, Ted harried him, clipping him with neat, crisp blows. They were light; there was no use in wasting effort when no vulnerable spot was exposed.

Then, for the second time, Ted miscalculated. He found himself flat-footed, felt the chill instant's foreknowledge of a blow, tried to cover up—too late. Bill's right, at short range, shot savagely into his body. A lightning, terrified twist at the last instant partly saved him. If the blow had landed fair and square, he would have gone down and out. As it was, it sent a sick stab of anguish through him. For a moment, the world went black. He felt his

knees give, and hung on desperately to his opponent, who, grunting with rage and triumph, was laboring mightily to disengage his right and land again.

"Break! Break, I tell you!"

The referee came at them. Ted's senses were clearing. With an adroit twist, he managed to get Bill between him and the referee, and so delay the separation. By the time the perspiring official thrust them apart, he had almost recovered. Almost, but not quite. Bill charged in again at once. Ted gave ground, but his left leg was not working properly; he failed to get away, but just managed to smother another haymaking right that was driven at his stomach. Bill crowded on top of him, hustling him against the ropes.

"Get away, you—!" spat Ted. And then, in sudden rage, he forgot everything about saving himself. The fighting animal came uppermost. Lashing out with the nervous fury of a cat, he caught Bill a couple of vicious right hooks to the mouth. Bill was hurt: he started, and craned his head back, pawing clumsily in the air to detain the stinging glove. With all his might, Ted loosed off another. It missed, just grazing Bill's forehead. Then, with a violent effort, Ted broke loose, and leaped away, gasping for breath. At the same time he saw Bill hesitate, and shake his head. A bright trickle of blood was running down his face. That last missed blow has cut his eyebrow!

Instantly, aching for rest though he was, Ted was upon him, pasting him with both hands. He knew at once that Bill would not be able to go on with a cut like that; he had seen too many, not to know.

So, blessing his luck, yet even in his excitement using no more energy than was absolutely necessary, he overwhelmed his stricken opponent with blows. Bill responded gallantly, but he could no longer see what he was doing. The crowd were on their feet, yelling. They saw only a whirlwind attack, with every blow going home, and their own man miraculously taking it all and yet remaining upon his feet. They did not know that there was nothing behind the blows; indeed, Bill himself did not realize that, till long afterwards. They never realized how near to disaster the champion had been. "Ah," they would say wisely among themselves afterwards, "that dig in the guts Bill gave him stung him up proper. Before that, he was only playing with him, taking it easy. That

fetched him, though! He wasn't going to have any more of that sort of thing."

Ted, his lungs red hot, his arms aching, began to curse. How much more did the — — referee want? He couldn't go on much longer. Then, just as the referee, in response to loud yells from the audience, was beginning to move doubtfully forward, the towel came in from Bill's corner.

The fight was over. Luck was with him. He had won!

With an effort so severe it brought the sweat out upon him, Ted walked around the ring, holding up his hands, smiling and nodding in response to the applause. Then he went to his corner. As soon as he sat down, his legs went limp. Even his second did not realize how near it had been.

"Well," he said, perfunctorily mopping him. "He was easy for you."

But Ted, looking across the ring, caught the eye of Bill's second, fixed upon him, bright with meaning. An old hand, he was not deceived. In spite of himself, Ted grinned. The other did not return the grin, but his baleful glance ever so slightly softened.

"Stammers is an uncommon hard man to beat," Ted was jerking out to the reporters presently, as he lay in the dressing room with the masseur busy on his legs and stomach. "As plucky a chap as ever I've fought. I hit him with all I had, and I couldn't knock him out."

Bill, sitting docile while the doctor stitched his brow, smiled wistfully when it came to his turn. "Only for this here cut," he hazarded, "I believe I could 'ave got him." The reporters smiled at one another. They little realized how near Bill came to the truth.

Wearily, Ted put on his coat, and adjusted his scarf. Another fence safely behind him. Now there was nothing to do but wait for the next. The inevitable day was postponed; but how long?

The Girl at Thorp's

by Warren Gibson

My boat was to sail at twelve o'clock noon and I was hurrying with some last minute packing, odds and ends left over from the night before; all the more important things had been put in, but cases left unstrapped to receive toilet articles and other small pieces which I might need in the morning.

I was off on my annual holiday, going fishing this year again as usual. I often thought of having a different sort of holiday, possibly going to the seashore, taking a long ocean trip or something of the kind, but in the end I usually did the same thing. I withstood the temptations presented by such conventional vacations, packed up my rods and reels and tried my luck with the salmon.

Good Lord! What a relief it was to get away. Tackle had all been looked over days before, fly cases checked and a few especially alluring ones added, a half dozen leaders and I thought my kit was complete; must not forget the tried and true old hat though, no luck without that old soft hat.

I taxied to the dock with all my luggage, plenty of time, found my quarters quite all right, in fact rather familiar, as I had gone north on this same boat on several previous occasions.

There was quite a crowd about the lower decks, so I made my way above to the upper deck, found a quiet corner to sit down in until the steward should come around and I could get a permanent chair.

Almost two whole days of absolute loafing before me. This was Saturday, we should make Halifax Monday morning after breakfast. Then a day spent in some minor shopping and getting my fishing permit, overnight train dropping me off at a little way-station at 5:30 in the morning. There to board a fussy old "chug chug" boat which would take me across the lake to Bedeck, at the wharf would be Joe waiting with the Ford, two hours later I would be on the spot.

Joe and Mrs. Joe have run the place for years, mostly Mrs. Joe really, it is she who does all the managing. Joe himself is

usually fishing or just getting ready to go fishing; he can be the busiest man doing nothing you ever saw.

Without Mrs. Joe the place wouldn't get on at all, she really runs things, oversees the kitchen, buys all the supplies, makes out your bill and it's she who accepts your money as you leave. Joe has his job though too: it is his part to greet you when arriving, string out his stock of stories during your stay and to look very sad and downcast at your departure; other than that he fishes. He's a lovable old fraud though. It's Joe as much as the fishing that keeps me coming back year after year.

It was a nice trip up, boat not too crowded, smooth water all the way and no fog. I did my various chores in Halifax on Monday, caught my train in the evening and in due time was put down on the dock where Joe's boy was waiting with the car. A few hours later I was sitting down close by just about the prettiest little salmon stream in Nova Scotia.

Right off I had my customary bad luck; there had been quite a lot of wet weather and for the first few days water was too high for fishing; we did manage to get a few trout from the meadow brook about a quarter mile back of camp though. By the fourth day the water had gone down and cleared up some and from then on we began to get our fishing. Seven beauties fell to my rod in the next few days and I was content, I don't care to murder the fish. The largest topped eighteen pounds, they get them larger up here but somehow I don't seem to land those big ones. My eighteen pounder gave me plenty of sport though, took me out well above the waist, dragged me nearly half mile and I came to shore thoroughly tired out and with a good part of the Margaree in my waders.

The day I had planned to go out I tramped up above the camp some three miles along the back trails and roads, coming down to the stream by the bridge. Not doing any fishing today, just rambling around and saying goodbye till next year.

The whole valley could be seen from here beautiful in the sunlight, small feathery clouds floating by overhead, the sound of rippling water below me, soft meadowland bordering the stream on both sides and then come the hills which bound the valley, lovely, and now I must leave it all and go back to the city. I stopped on the bridge to enjoy this wonderful picture and to see in the sweep of the stream as it came down, a rare opportunity for a painter.

Just at the curve above me I saw a fisherman on the opposite bank making ready to cast. He was perhaps some three or four hundred yards upstream; he waded out well above the knees to make his first cast far out to the middle of the stream. There was a sure and workmanlike sweep to the cast that marked him as no novice, that was certain. I stood there for a time watching; it's a pretty sight to see good casting such as this and I was in a splendid position to watch. Cast after cast he made a good twenty-five yards, coming to water right in the channel where it runs strong and swift and where one usually hooks the big fish.

As I stood there watching he started downstream toward me, working the stream as he came along. As he reached a bit of gravelly beach just above the bridge he waded to shore, turned face toward me and looked up. To my surprise I then saw it was a woman, a young woman perhaps in her early twenties.

She was wearing the usual fishing duds, soft felt hat, canvas jacket, men's trousers and high waders; it was not surprising I had not seen it was a woman. I leaned over the bridge rail and nodded to her, she nodded to me and waved a hand in casual greeting. I wouldn't recognize her again, there was quite a distance between us and I couldn't see very much of her face anyhow.

When I returned to camp I told Joe about seeing the girl fishing up above the bridge.

"Oh yes," he said, "I heard o' her, she been comin' up here fur three to four years now but I never did run into her. Some o' the guides they told me about her, said she was pretty good too."

"Yes, she handles a mean rod, Joe; I watched her quite awhile and it was pretty. Where does she stay, do you know?"

"Thorp's, I hear; Thorp got a place up that way a piece above the bridge. She must be stayin' up there."

I had never seen Thorp's but I knew about where it was located. "Well, you ought to take a day off sometime, Joe, and go up there and look her over, she might give you a few pointers."

Women casting for salmon were not often met with in this country, in fact this was the only time I had encountered one in all the years of coming up here. She made quite an impression upon me.

I did not go out the following day as intended; the weather was so fine I just hated to leave, so decided to give the fish one more try after all. The next afternoon, however, I packed up and

got everything ready for an early start in the morning. Joe was to drive to Bedeck, where I would get a boat going back through the lakes to Mulgrave, from there by train to Truro, where I could catch the limited for Montreal. I had some business which would keep me a few hours, perhaps overnight, continuing to New York in the morning.

It might have been more direct and with less changing to drive to Sydney, from there by train back to Halifax and make the same limited, but I had looked forward to the all day boat trip down the lakes, one of the most beautiful to be had in the Provinces. Also Truro being a junction point on the main line, I would lose no time going out this way.

The boat was late in arriving at Bedeck. It usually is, I fancy, but as there would be several hours wait over at Mulgrave for my train it did not matter. The little boat reached Mulgrave late in the evening, after dark at this time of year, and my train would not come along until midnight, so I had a rather long wait with nothing to do but hang around a deserted railroad station, no pleasing prospect. When it arrived I was fortunate in getting a lower and went to bed at once.

At Truro the next morning reservations were awaiting me in response to my wire from Bedeck.

A cup of coffee and some toast had been my breakfast, so after getting on the train I went in for lunch at the first opportunity. The car steward showed me to a small table with an empty chair opposite. During the next few minutes the car filled rapidly. I had just finished my bouillon when a young woman was shown to the table. I rose and bowed to her as she seated herself, then continued with my lunch,

When I looked up a second or two later I saw her eyes fixed upon my chop, which I had just begun to eat; it was grilled with some bacon and I found it excellent. I thought perhaps she was thinking it might suit her own taste. Now the subject of food might serve as well as any other to start conversation with a charming young woman that a kind fate had put before me, so I began by saying:

"If you are interested, the chop is really very good; I would say you cannot do better."

"It does look good. I think perhaps I will," she replied.

From that opening I carried on, we talked of this and that, quite usual table talk such as people use under these circumstances.

All the while I was casually looking her over. She spoke well in a not unpleasant voice; clothes fitted her well, they were quiet and chosen with taste, dark brown sports type with something of orange tone for vest or under jacket; a soft felt hat with flopped down brim completed the picture and it all had the mark of good taste. She was possibly twenty-five, not more certainly, perhaps less, her features were good. I do not think you would say she was pretty, pleasing surely and she had the loveliest eyes, quite the very best thing about her were the eyes, she had the trick of smiling with her eyes. Large and of the deepest blue, real Irish eyes they were and very good to see. Altogether I decided she must be a person of refinement and one who might prove a very interesting companion on the journey if it could be worked out. I would see what could be done about it.

I managed it so that we should finish lunch about the same time, we paid our individual checks and rose from the table together.

"May I offer you a cigarette?" I asked. "And could we go back to the club car to smoke?"

"Why, yes, I think I should like that," she replied. So we made our way back to the rear of the train for comfortable chairs. As she walked on ahead of me I noted she was somewhat taller than I had thought. I am by no means a tall man, five feet nine to be exact, and I saw she was but slightly below me in height, a matter of a couple of inches perhaps, must be long in the legs I thought. I noticed too that they were very good-looking legs and very trim, nice-looking ankles. I did not like her shoes though, not quite right with the rest of the costume, it seemed to me; they were made up of different kinds of leather with little perforations all over and tied with broad ribbon and were high in the heel.

We found chairs, got comfortably fixed and lighted our cigarettes. There was a long dreary train ride ahead and I had hated the thought of this part of the trip home; now here was a diversion which might help a lot, much better than reading and besides I had no book with me; the car library is usually a total loss and the radio grows to be a terrible bore.

These thoughts were running through my head in the second or two as we moved our chairs around facing the windows. I was just

turning to say something or other when she asked me whether I had boarded the train at Halifax.

"No, I got on at Truro," I replied. "I have had an all night trip, in fact even longer than that. I came down through the Bras d'Or Lakes the day before."

She seemed interested at hearing me say that. "Why, that's curious, isn't it? I've been up in that part of the country too. I came out another way though. I came by way of Sydney and Halifax to make this train. I thought that the most direct way."

"Yes, that's right it is and probably quicker too, but you see I wanted to come down through the lakes. Ever since I have been coming up here they have been telling me I should go out by the lake route. This time I made up my mind I would. I'm glad I did too, it was a gorgeous trip all the way, marvelous. I enjoyed every minute of it."

"You speak as though you came up here pretty often," she questioned, "what brings you so much to this out-of-the-way part of the world?"

"Oh," I answered, "I belong to the fisherman tribe, they go all over you know; when we find a good stream we stay for awhile but when it grows popular why then we have to move on again."

"So you are a fisherman, are you? Salmon, I suppose, in this country. Where do you find that good stream you are talking about, or is that too inquisitive?"

"No," I replied. "I don't mind telling you, it's no private water and not too much fished as yet. I've been on the Margaree, been going there four or five years now. I like the country and I like the people."

"The Margaree! Why, that's just where I've been. I'm a fisherman too. Isn't it remarkable we should meet on a train like this? What I mean is, we've both come from way up there, sort of end of the world almost and we start home different ways and get on the same train at different stations and then I come and sit down at your table and we get to talking and all these days we've been almost next door to each other, on the same stream anyhow. Oh, I do think it the strangest thing. Don't you?"

As a matter of fact there was even more that she didn't know, if I was right in my surmise. It had come to me like a shot while she had been talking. It was almost a certainty she was the girl I had seen that day from the bridge. Not at all likely there would

be more than one woman fishing on the Margaree, so I answered:

"Yes, it is strange, as you say. Now tell me this: Were you by any chance fishing last Sunday morning, just above that old steel bridge by Thorp's?"

"Sunday morning, let me think," she mused. "Why yes I was, that was my last time out. I wanted to try out a Jock Scot but I had no luck at all."

"Well, what do you know about that?" I returned. "Besides all the other strange and remarkable things you have mentioned there is this one more. We are really quite old acquaintances. I was the man on the bridge."

She looked at me in amazement and then we both burst out laughing.

"My dear girl," I continued, "that dining car steward was my good angel all right. I don't know how but somehow he did know you belonged at my table. I'll put him in my prayers tonight and, what he will probably appreciate much more, I'll not forget him at dinner tonight."

After this I am sure neither of us felt we were mere chance acquaintances of little more than an hour. We sat on there talking of one thing and another for a good part of the afternoon. I tried to find out as much about her as I could without being overly inquisitive. By now I was sure that not only was she an interesting companion for a day's journey but also if possible I was not going to say a conventional goodbye when we reached Montreal in the morning.

She told very little of herself or her affairs. I gathered from her talk she had travelled about a good deal, seemed to know a number of cities, had no very extensive knowledge of books, went in little for sports except the fishing of which she was extremely fond and always did alone. I was curious to know whether she was married or single, divorced or perhaps a widow. I did not think she was a business girl. Men did not appear to be much in her life, at least she didn't mention them. I could not recall any reference to her people and there was a strange mixture in her sometimes, there was evidence of refinement and education and then sometimes would come something quite different, a word or expression might be quite coarse and unrefined. It was surprising.

Later on in the afternoon she excused herself with some word

about repacking a bag but not before I had arranged to see her at dinner.

We dined late that night. An hour or two afterward in the club car I found her well versed in various sporting topics of the day; spoke in the "right language" and needed no detailed explanations, she was *on* to practically everything. Had a masculine attitude generally and yet she was very feminine, I think I was always quite conscious of the woman of her. We had not touched upon any "sexy" stuff in conversation, nevertheless sex was always very present in her; one could not be near her long without feeling that.

Just before going off to bed we stepped out on to the observation platform for a little air. It was a splendid night, stars blinking away up there in the heavens, the air cool and sweet, here and there a glimpse of the river. We were quite alone out there and it seemed intimate and cozy. She leaned a little toward me, I thought, and for a second our bodies touched and her hand rested on my arm. It was a "chumpy" thing to do. I took her quickly in my arms, drew her head down on to my shoulder and kissed her hard, full on the lips.

She was absolutely quiet, no protest, no surprise or exclamation, nothing whatever; just nothing. Certainly no response. I might as well have been kissing a mummy. I was surprised, for I had kissed with passion and desire just as I had felt at the moment and she was never the kind of girl to take it like that, she did not impress me as being the cold type. She might resent it, she might welcome it, but in either case I would bet my life she would be absolutely and fully *alive.*

She turned toward the door without a word to me. I made no protest and we walked in silence through the train. When we reached her section I said good night and continued on to my own car ahead. As I undressed and crawled into the berth I had a distinct feeling that I had rather made a mess of things. I was certainly no hero.

Next morning I breakfasted alone, later in the morning stopping at her seat with the idea of squaring myself if I could. I thought it likely, after all I had not done anything so very terrible, she had no right to have such tempting lips and lovely eyes if she didn't expect to be kissed.

The incident was to be ignored, I found; that was plain from the first, she was in very good humor. Last night was *out.* I thought

to myself, I just used the wrong system, that was all. The idea was probably all right. I approached it the wrong way, that was the trouble. Sedative for my vanity.

I was now more sure than ever that this adventure should not come to an end at Montreal. Some way must be found to carry on. This girl was evidently not interested in a kiss in the dark, I should have to evolve something which would interest her. Eyes like hers that promised so much could not possibly have been made all for nothing.

We were nearing the end of the journey now and I had no definite plan or idea. I only knew I was going to make the try somehow.

Perhaps I might suggest her staying over and going on to New York with me the following day. I wondered would that work out. Well, why not? It seemed a wonderful idea to me, why would it not appeal to her also? She was no child, she could decide for herself and despite the lack of response to the kiss, I had a feeling I was not unattractive to her. The whole business of last night did not mean very much really, nerves get a bit ragged on a long trip like this. A good hotel, tub, change into other clothes, a good dinner and comfortable quarters; that should make all the difference in the world. Yes, I would suggest it.

We were by now almost to the terminal, luggage had been carried to the vestibule by the porter and passengers were preparing to leave so time was short. I turned to her and said:

"Here we are at last. Do you plan stopping over in Montreal or are you going through? I am afraid you will have difficulty in getting away today unless you have already made reservations. Now, I have a suggestion, it is this: Stay over. We can dine together, perhaps see a show or anything you like; let's make a party of it. We two have had such a good time I just hate to let you go so soon. Now what do you say?"

She looked at me straight in the eyes for a second and answered:

"No, I have made no reservations as yet." Nothing more and yet she had not failed to understand me, of that I felt sure. I waited a little to give her time but she added nothing.

"Well, then," I persisted, "what do you think of my plan? We must not ignore the blessed fate that brought us together. I very much want you to stay and I'll land you safe and sound in New York."

The train was in the terminal by now, passengers were crowding into the aisles and we had to move along with the others, so there was no chance for anything more at the moment. Still I had an idea it was as good as settled.

At the curb our porters had a taxi waiting, here she held out her hand to me and said, "Thank you a lot for a pleasant journey. It's been nice to know you. Goodbye."

This was not at all what I was expecting, it rather knocked me off my balance. True she had not said *yes* but she had not said *no*. Perhaps I was expected to be more persistent. Very well, my girl, I thought; you shall have it your own way. I handed her into the waiting taxi, insisting I would see her safely to her destination, with the idea of playing up to her whim as we drove along.

It was not to be so simple as all that, however. Instead of going to the far side she sat quickly in the seat next the open door, put forth her hand again and said, "Thank you for everything. Don't spoil it. Goodbye; you've been very kind."

What could I do? Nothing but just what I did do. Have the porter take my luggage off, raise my hat to her and watch her drive away, standing there by the curb feeling very much the fool and and then turning in time to find the porter grinning at me. I cursed him and told him to find me another taxi.

Reaching my hotel I took a much needed tub, dressed and went for a walk. A good lunch later on put me in better spirits. I tried to argue that possibly I would not have found her as attractive in town as she had proved on the train, perhaps all was for the best. I could not make it very convincing though.

During the afternoon I attended to the business which had brought me here, spent rather a stupid evening and next morning went on to New York.

Back from my holiday I found things piled up at the office and was kept busy for several days with little or no time for anything else. Once in awhile I would think of beautiful dark blue eyes and all that might have been, but most of all I think my thoughts went back to that strangely unflattering dismissal at the station in Montreal. It was all over now, no good having any regrets at this late day, forget it. Suffering pride I suppose it was, I had thought I was a very devil of a fellow and had taken it on the chin.

One evening several weeks later, walking along Fifty-seventh

street after dining uptown with some friends, I reached that neighborhood of the lighted shop windows and picture galleries which occupy several blocks. Particularly was I interested in some of the pictures and had stopped to admire a Venetian of very splendid color when I was conscious of a slight touch on my arm. I paid no attention at first, then it happened again unmistakably this time and I turned to see who was nudging me so persistently.

At my side stood a young woman looking in the window. I saw at once she had all the appearance of a distinct type often to be seen in this neighborhood; they are unmistakably to be recognized, a certain hang of the clothes, kind of walk, an air of going nowhere in particular, in fact the whole atmosphere is indicative of the type and seldom to be mistaken and although this girl was simply standing by me I placed her at once as one of our ladies of the evening.

She went on looking in the window but knew I had turned to observe her, I am sure. I was not at all surprised when I heard her say:

"Hello, are you out for a walk?"

Something about the sound of the voice was familiar to me. Where had I heard that voice before? I looked closely at her face and at that instant she turned toward me and I got a good look at her. There was an immediate recognition by both; I stood speechless, not a word would come out. On her part she was as dumb as I, she dropped her eyes and in a second turned and walked away from me.

Good God! How was such a thing possible? This was my fishing girl, the girl of the Montreal train, the same one I had found such an interesting companion, the girl of such uncompromising morals. Oh there must be some mistake somewhere. I must have been wrong. It wasn't the same. I would hurry after her to make sure there had been a mistake.

Of course that was all just sheer nonsense. It was sure enough, perfectly sure. There had been no mistake, I had recognized her beyond all doubt and she had also recognized me.

So I didn't follow her. I couldn't somehow and there wasn't anything for me to say. I realized that when I thought the thing over. So instead I started off in the opposite direction, turned the next corner and went in at the first place to get something to drink.

Cocks Must Fight

by Theodore Pratt

"IT'D PLEASURE me some to see cockfightin' in this pit." Piper Jentry spat a stream of tobacco juice. The brown spittle, emerging from his loose lips, hit the white Florida sand at his feet with a faint plop. A chameleon, disturbed where it lay hidden under the spray of a palmetto leaf, scuttled to another safety, changing from green to gray as it entered the hot morning sunlight. Cocks, confined in their crates, stretched their necks and crowed lustily, defying the day of death before them.

The men stirred. They murmured and began movements. It was Piper Jentry's privilege to signalize that greetings were over, that there had been enough discussion and examination of birds, enough boasting, and that it was time to begin the main. Piper was recognized as the local expert on cockfighting, as the best handler of birds, as having the most successful cocks. He raised them on his small truck-farm in the muck land back near the edge of town and people said if he knew as much about truck-farming, and put into it the same enthusiasm he had for cockfighting, he would be a rich man.

Now he stood quiescent except for the quick movement of his jaws as he chewed. His little gray eyes darted through the crowd, blazing with scornful interest at the other men bending over their crates, lighting with fierce anticipation when he glanced at his own. His thin, light hair was already tousled, his puffy face was flushed, his arms, inside his white shirt, hung down along the sides of his full body like those of a chimpanzee.

A tall thin cracker approached him holding a red cock in his hands and asked, "You got somethin' to meet this'n?"

Piper glanced negligently at the bird. "He don't look hardly conditioned," he said. "You ever fight him before?"

"Maybe not," the man admitted defensively, "but he kin likely lick ary yourn."

Piper waved this aside. "Let's have somethin' with someways experience first," he put the cracker off. "I'll kill that red later."

The man took his bird back and another stepped forward with

a black cock. "You know this one, Piper," he said good-naturedly. "He's won twice, once over you."

Piper recognized the cock. "I forget exactly what he weighs."

"Right about an even four."

"I've got a part Spaniard that'll come two-three ounces of him."

"Which way?"

"Won't be over."

"Let's see him."

Piper went a couple of yards to his light truck where it was parked in the shade of scrub palms, undid some fastenings, and pulled out a mottled cock that looked about with bold inquiry from beady dark eyes.

The man holding the black cock examined the Spaniard, taking care not to touch it. "What're you fixin' to fight him for?"

"I'll fight this Spaniard for twenty-five dollars. He ain't worth noways less'n."

The other man hesitated a moment, thought, and agreed, "I surely take it."

The birds were weighed in by the Sheriff, who was fittingly the greatest cockfighting enthusiast in the county and who acted as referee. As soon as it was over, Piper said, "Let's get'm heeled. Somebody make a book." Piper handed the Spaniard to the man acting as his helper, who sat down on the running-board of the truck and held the cock firmly, its legs sticking out so that the stumps of its natural spurs, which had been shaved to bluntness, pointed upward.

Piper obtained the green metal fishing-tackle box he used to keep his equipment in, and knelt on the ground before his bird.

He felt of its stumps to see if they were clean and smooth, then fitted over one of them a small square of chamois with a hole in it. Judiciously he took out a gleaming steel spur with its wicked three-inch curve to a needle end, and tested its point on his finger. Not satisfied, he sharpened it with a bit of fine sandpaper. He fitted its band over the stump on the bird's leg, getting it tight by taking it off repeatedly and wrapping thin strips of chamois around the stump. When the set of it, straight with the leg and pointing downward, passed his critical judgment, he bound it fast in place with a length of waxed cord. Then he started on the second one.

While he worked, a young man in a stiff straw hat went about making a book on the fight and getting it covered. Piper was first

asked how much he wanted of it. "I reckon ten," he said, "no, make it rightly fifteen." He kept on working, concentrating on his job. A group shuttled back and forth between him and where the black cock was being heeled. Piper usually kept up a running banter with the questions asked of him by the bettors. But today he merely answered, "I believe in this cock forty dollars worth." He seemed abstracted, appeared to have something on his mind apart from cock-fighting. Which was strange for Piper.

When his helper stood up for the clipping, Piper worked in silence. He sheared the Spaniard's wings and tail briefly. He frowned, made as if to say something, then didn't. He clipped almost to the skin under the cock's body to lighten in and lessen the chances of it getting spurred there. He didn't hear the Sheriff ask him if he was about ready. He kept on clipping, thinking whatever it was he was thinking and trying to say it. Finally he did say it. Without looking up, Piper announced gruffly, "My wife had another kid last night. Biggety young un, too—weighed ten pounds."

This information considerably enlivened the already spirited proceedings. The men knew Piper's wife from his having brought her to the mains. She didn't come often. She didn't like cockfights. She was a timid, pretty little thing, much younger than Piper. He had taken her out of an orphanage and married her after his first wife died. They already had one child, a girl of two, and with the news of a second, huge comment broke out at Piper. Remarks were made about the unusual weight of the baby, about Piper's concurrent abilities as a father, and such things as when he was going to fight it. A bottle of whiskey was offered to Piper to drink from, but he refused. He busied himself with letting his bird peck savagely at a piece of sliced apple. There was a pouting, rather antagonistic, serious expression on Piper's face. He opened his mouth to say something more, as if to add to his news, but the Sheriff interrupted by calling, "Let's have a cockfight, Mr. Jentry."

"Havin' it right on, Sheriff."

Piper took the Spaniard from his helper and made his way with the others to the pit. The pit, the center of the place three miles from town where the mains were held every other Sunday, was an octangle fifteen feet across, dug two feet deep in the sand, and supported at the sides by wide, unpainted boards set in at a slant. Above it, covering also the benches for spectators and the

beer and sandwich stand, was a rickety awning made of old pieces of canvas and rusty sheets of corrugated tin.

Piper spat out his tobacco, washed his mouth with water from a bottle his helper brought along, and descended into the pit with his bird. The other man was already there, holding his black cock under one arm carefully so as not to hook himself on the spurs. The Sheriff let his paunch down into the pit and with a stick drew three lines in the hard clay floor. One he drew across the center, and one parallel about three feet on either side of this. Then he announced to the crowd:

"I ain't so sorry I won't let y'all know I got ten dollars on the Spaniard and if anybody objects to my jedgin', let them say now or hold their peace. I usually favor the other side to my own." He looked around with heavy solemnity. No one spoke. He turned to the other two men in the pit with him. "Bill your cocks."

Piper and the other man made shoulder-high lunging motions at each other with their birds. As the cocks came together, one would dart out with his beak and grab the other by the comb, hanging on until pulled away. This was repeated a number of times, each bird getting angrier and angrier, before the men stood back with them.

The Sheriff took out his watch and stared at it. Piper stood tensely a foot back of the outside lines, holding his bird high above his head where it could breathe fresh, moving air. "Get ready!" the Sheriff warned. Piper squatted on his heels, letting his bird to the ground and holding it by the tail as it strained and lunged to get at the bird opposite it held in the same way. The Sheriff cried, "Pit'm!"

The two cocks dashed toward each other, met, pecked wildly, flapped their wings, and separated. Instantly they came back together again, jabbing ferociously with their beaks. The black cock got Piper's Spaniard by the comb and held on tenaciously. The Spaniard shook loose, danced back, leaped into the air and slashed at his opponent with flashing spurs. One spur missed, but the other caught in feathers and flesh on the breast. The crowd yelled as both birds went down in a tangle, struggling.

"Handle your cocks!" the Sheriff cried instantly. "Handle them cocks!"

The two men knelt swiftly by the birds. Piper gently withdrew his Spaniard's spur from the other bird. He stepped back with his

bird and held it high in the air, waiting for the Sheriff to start them again.

Four more times the birds met, sank steel and had to be separated. On the last pit the Spaniard got it in the neck and drooped perceptibly. Piper held the side of the cock's open beak to his mouth and spat in it. He smoothed its ruffled feathers and pinched its comb. The cock freshened.

The next time they ran toward each other the Spaniard, full of fury, jumped into the air before they met and sank the end of one of his spurs half an inch in the black cock's brain. It happened so quickly that the crowd didn't know what had occurred and didn't start to yell until the black cock lay dead on the floor of the pit and the Spaniard stood over him, stretching his neck and crowing in triumph.

Piper, grinning, showing his yellow teeth, picked up his winner and caressed it lovingly. Bets were paid off by the bookmaker, joking recriminations heard out and answered, and the crowd dribbled away from the pit back to the cars where the birds were kept.

Other fights were held, and Piper was always in the pit. If he wasn't fighting one of his own birds, he handled those of others. He won more times than he lost, and once when he lost he said philosophically, expressing all his deep passion for the sport, "That's cockfightin'." The preoccupied manner he had early in the morning deserted him entirely, and if he had anything more on his mind in connection with the birth of his new child, he had forgotten about it. No one mentioned the baby again until along toward noon during the rest period when the crowd was bigger and the beer and sandwich stand was doing a rushing business. Then someone asked, "What you callin' your new young un by, Piper?"

Piper, seeming to recollect something, frowned, and replied shortly, "I cain't properly call it nothin'."

"Can't call it nothin'? What's troublin'? Ain't it a sure enough male or female, one?"

"It was a he right enough. But I reckon it weren't hatched right, so it never was alive."

The men stared at Piper. In their glances and in the momentary arresting of their movements, was a commentary on him. But no one expressed it. They fell silent except for awkward expressions of wonder and sympathy here and there. For a moment Piper acted as if he was going to answer them with an outburst, but

evidently he changed his mind, for instead he demanded, "How about a cockfight? Let's have a cockfight."

Piper's shirt became splattered with the blood of the cocks and with his own when he was accidentally spurred handling the birds. As if the sight and smell and feel of the blood stirred him, Piper became more and more engrossed in the fighting. A fixed look came into his eyes. The taste of his hobby was so strong, and he drank so much of it, that he appeared to be as drunk with it as some of the men were who worked at bottles they had with them. Piper got so he would do almost anything to get another fight going. The cracker with the red cock had kept pestering him for a fight, and finally Piper told him, "I'll give you a cheap fight for five dollars with a blinker half a pound under that thing you're boastin' on. The red's dead already."

This time the betting went against Piper. The crowd didn't think his blinker could best a heavier two-eyed bird. Over and over the bookmaker announced, "There's ninety dollars on the red. Any of you crackers or gentlemen want to cover it? The blinker's the winner." But no one, not even the Sheriff, who religiously bet on Piper, believed him. Piper glared. Recklessly he said, "I'll take it." This seemed to relieve the exasperation noticeable in his manner since the beginning of the day. Curious stares went on him. It wasn't like Piper to make a foolish bet, and this was a very foolish one, which he deserved to lose.

The two cocks circled each other warily before they struck, the blinker always keeping the side his good eye was on turned toward his adversary. He was an experienced bird, and not easily caught off guard, but the red was quick and darted in. If he had known how to fight with spurs he could have ended it swiftly, but his attack became ludicrous when he hooked his own spurs together, laying him out helplessly. During that pit the blinker sank a spur harmlessly in the red's wing and they had to be handled.

The red cock ran circles around the blinker and tired him out. Again and again he hooked the blinker, so that blood began to show. But he didn't know how to make a kill and the blinker fought on, always with his head a little to one side, looking out of his only eye. After awhile the red began to slow down, losing his impetuosity. Then the blinker got to work. But he was weak by this time and couldn't get high enough in the air to inflict a mortal injury. The fight became a pecking contest, with the birds so ex-

hausted that they could barely stand. Finally the red had enough. He wanted to go home. He turned tail and ran away and wouldn't fight unless the blinker followed and attacked him. The blinker got him down, and pranced around, pecking at his head.

"Count for me," said Piper.

The Sheriff counted, ponderously, up to ten. "One for Mr. Jentry," he said.

The two men stepped in and gathered up the cocks. Piper collected saliva in his mouth and, kissing the blinker, gave it to him. He took the comb of the bird between his lips and sucked it. He caressed it and held it high in the air while the Sheriff drew two more lines on either side of the middle one, this time only a foot from it. The cocks were too far gone to travel the greater distance attacking.

Piper had to get three counts of ten in succession and then a count of twenty to win. If the red fought at any time, all counts were off. Piper worked mightily over his bird, spitting into its beak and licking its comb, sometimes taking its whole head into his mouth. He lost his count of ten, got two more, lost them, and started over again. At last he got three, and the count of twenty began with the red inert on the ground, the blinker pecking at his eyes. Piper warned the cracker to withdraw his bird or it would be killed. The cracker stubbornly refused. While the Sheriff counted, the blinker pecked the red's eyes out and then started on his head, and when the red was picked up he was dead.

Piper retrieved his cock and held it solicitously, looking at it and shaking his head mournfully. Blood came off on his hands; the blinker was saturated with it. After a moment, while the crowd watched, the blinker's neck drooped and then swung all the way down. Though it was still breathing, it was certain that it wouldn't be able to survive its injuries.

Tears came to Piper's eyes as he carried the blinker to his truck. He muttered brokenly something about it being against all law and nature for a bird to die that had won such a game fight.

He blubbered about having to kill it to end its misery. He took out his knife, struck a tragic pose, then with infinite regret in every line of his gesture, cut the blinker's throat. The bird twitched as the little blood remaining in it began to flow out slowly.

As Piper stood there holding the bleeding bird, a newcomer who had just arrived from town came up to him. When he saw

Piper an astonished look came to his face and he stood there staring at him. Piper saw him and looked back at him vacantly for a minute. Then he seemed to return from somewhere and remember something. He glared at the man, mumbled, and suddenly accused, "You're wantin' to say about my Missus." He turned to the crowd and announced bluntly, "She's dead, too."

This time the men froze in their places. They looked at Piper as if seeing another man there. They looked at each other. They looked at the limp blinker upon which Piper had lavished so much affection. "You mean to say," one of them asked, "your wife died last night givin' birth and you're here today cockfightin'?"

Piper whirled on him. "You see me," he said harshly. "And y'all'd be mighty disappointed if I didn't come with my cocks as you was expectin'. I purely don't know what you're takin' shame about. Come on," he said at large, "how about a cockfight? Let's have a cockfight!"

"Mind that!" someone exclaimed. "Mind it!" No one else said anything.

The Battle Royal

by Lewis Herman

SAM HAD MET Charley Simms at Fat's Chili Parlor on 47th street. Charley was a sport. Charley was a pimp. Charley sold "happy dust." Charley Simms was the man to see on the South side when there was a "battle royal" to be put on at a stag affair or a lodge meeting or at the Fight Stadium for the North Side stiffs.

Sam was munching a hamburger at Fat's place. His last nickel had gone to the purchase of it. He looked out of Fat's fly-specked window with a faraway glaze in his eyes. His jaws moved rhythmically up and down on the hamburger.

Charley took one look at Sam's powerful frame. He saw the heavy back muscles bunched under the shoulder blades. He saw the cloth of Sam's coat sleeves drawn taut over the muscles. He approached him without hesitation.

"Wotcha doin' t'night, big boy?"

Sam turned to see the flashily attired Charley Simms at his side. He knew him for what he was. Everyone knew Charley Simms and his rackets and shied away from him and his dubious business propositions. Somehow or other he fixed it so that the other guy held the dirty end of the stick. His middle name was trouble. But Sam wasn't disturbed. His nature wasn't the kind that was easily stirred. Thoughts stir. Sam's kind was slow to thought and slow to action. Instead of resenting Charley's intrusion, Sam grinned from ear to ear and drawled out slowly, "Nawthin'!"

Charley looked down at the hamburger in Sam's hand. This boy'd be havin' coffee if'n he had the dough, he thought. "Howdja like t' mek yo'sehf a piece o' change?"

Sam gulped down the wad of sandwich he had bitten before answering. Then he said, "What doin'?"

"Strickly legit, big boy, strickly legit!"

"What doin'?"

"Oh! . . . the boys is gonna have a li'l fight down at the Stadium on Belmont Avenoo . . . Nort' Side . . . I been pickin' me up some o' my frien's so's dey can make deyselves a piece o' change . . ."

"What I gotta do?"

Charley hesitated. "Oh! . . . jes' put de gloves on an' box aroun' some . . ."

"What I git?"

"Ten bucks an' a meal th'owed in . . . twenny if'n ya wins"

Sam continued to chew on his hamburger. He realized that he had spent his last nickel. He owed his landlady three bucks for a week's rent. He'd been laid off from the Stockyards. And there wasn't any dough in sight. Except what Charley Simms was offering. But you gotta be careful of Charley. His middle name was trouble. But Sam squared his shoulders as he turned in his seat to Charley. He felt the muscles uncoil beneath his skin. Might get you a black eye, he thought. Worth ten bucks. Mebbe twenty if you won. Twenty bucks! Room rent paid. Stutson hat, hot high-yaller, gin an' flat! Stutson hat; Hot dawg!

"O. K. Charley!" he said.

Charley wrote the address on a tissue-paper napkin and handed it to Sam. "Dere's de place. Be dere seven o'clock. Got any fight togs?"

"Nawp!"

"Guess yo' kin fight in yo' shohts an' socks."

Sam looked down at the scribbled address. It was upside down. He couldn't read. But he didn't care to let Charley know that. Instead he asked, "How 'bout cahfare?"

Charley gave him a twobit piece. "Keep de change, big boy, but gimme a good fight!" He started off. "I be seein' ya!"

"Yeh!" Sam said. He turned around to the counter when he saw that Charley had left and called for Fat. "Gimme a fry chicken san'wich, cawfee an' pie!" he yelled.

He had to walk fifteen miles that evening in order to get to the Fight Stadium on the North Side.

That was how he found himself in the dressing room of the Fight Stadium. He had just discovered that he was scheduled to fight in a battle royal. One of the other colored boys squeezed into the tiny cubicle had told him. Sam wasn't exactly afraid. Nothing scared him. He'd been able to take care of himself in the past. But it was only that he had never fought in a ring before. He'd been in dozens of street fights. As a creeper to some comely married wench's backdoor, he had been caught a number of times by an irate, cuckolded husband and had been forced to fight. But this

was to be a battle royal. Hazily, he recalled some of the details of his job. You got into a ring with a lot of other fellows. Then you began hitting the next guy. The one who stood up to the end won the fight. Shucks! he thought. That was easy. He grinned. All y' had t'do was t' fake a knockdown. Hell! you'd be one of the first t'drop. You make yourself an easy ten bucks an' a feed. Let some other damnfool nigger get all slammed up for twenny bucks.

He sat on his box and watched the other negroes in all degrees of undress. Some were showing off in front of the others by shadow-boxing in their socks. Others were sitting around, like Sam, waiting for something to happen. Only one of them appeared to be happy about it. He was a big blueblack nigger. Six-foot-six of solid brawn and bone, he towered in his stockinged feet. His head scraped the ceiling as he naively flexed and unflexed the cordoned muscles of his arms and back. His white teeth stood out against his skin like snow crystals on black velvet. He knew himself to be the physical superior of any there. And he revelled in the knowledge. Some of the others eyed him fearfully. Sam yawned and listened to the hisses of the crowd upstairs filtering through the crack in the wooden partition.

The amateur bouts dragged on. Occasionally, Sam saw the handlers drag an inert colored boy past the door. Others, in tights, with flaming bathrobes flung around their shoulders, were able to walk by on their own feet. But their faces were all battered up. Yet the spectacle of their bloodied countenances didn't worry Sam. He knew what he was going to do. Ten bucks was ten bucks. He'd take a couple of socks any time and then lay down, for ten bucks. He was a wise nigger, this boy was, he thought. Sam heard the house quiet down. He pushed his ear closer to the crack in the wall. Something was going to happen. Somebody was screaming out words at the top of his voice in shrill tones that carried into every part of the Stadium, even down into the basement dressing room by way of the crack through which Sam was listening. The others with him stopped chattering. The big, black bucknigger sat down on a bench. His liverlips closed, dissolving the snow crystals of his teeth back into his blue-gummed mouth.

"Ladies an' gennelmen!" came through the crack in the wall. "We're gonna p'sent now the feature o' the evenin'. You all been settin' here an' waitin' fer this here feature, I know. So I'm not gonna say much except t'say 'at the management ain't responsible

for what happens affer this. Ladies an' gennelmen! It's my honor an' privilege to announce a battle royal between twelve o' the blackest, huskiest an' biggest colored fighters on the South Side!"

A colored second in a turtle-necked white sweater came into the dressing room. The sweater was flecked with blood. "Come on, boys!" he called out, "you're next!"

For a moment, all hesitated. The Big Boy hung back. Sam jumped up and strode out fearlessly. The rest of the gang shambled after him, the Big Boy winding up in the rear of the doleful procession. They trailed up the stairs from the basement, down the main aisle of the arena and finally into the ring.

Sam blinked his eyes as he wormed himself under the ropes and into the blinding glare of the floodlights above. He advanced to the center of the ring and stood there grinning. The others followed him and huddled around the center with him. They looked bewildered. None of them had evidently been in a boxing ring before.

The crowd in the arena was roaring in laughter. The negroes looked an ungainly lot. Attired in tattered tights, some in B. V. D.'s, others in the bottoms of their athletic underwear and one in the lower half of a long-legged pair of woolen drawers, they looked like a set of Shakespearean clowns in an hilarious farce-comedy. The Big Boy dropped his fear the moment he saw the audience. His infectious grin returned to his face. He began to flex his muscles, strutting around the ring like a peacock. Occasionally, he would throw a remark to one of the ringside customers. The others in the room grew more uncomfortable. They stared out into the sea of white moons that stretched out into Godknowswhere and wondered what it was all about. Sam spied a chair in a corner and immediately appropriated it for himself. The crowd roared its approval. Laughter rippled from one side of the house to the other. Soon, the entire assemblage was howling in laughter. Even the frightened negroes in the ring dropped some of their bewilderment and grinned. The joke was on them, they knew, but it was worth ten bucks.

The announcer, a short bald-headed man of slight build, slid under the ropes and advanced to the center of the ring, pushing some of the negroes aside. His white shirt shone under the battery of lights overhead. He threw his hands into the air for silence.

Gradually, the house quieted down. Then he began in his shrill voice:

"Ladies an' gennelmen! This here's gonna be a battle royal. I guess I don't hafta say anything else. Las' man up is t' get the gran' prize!" He turned to the negroes in the ring. "You unnerstan', boys, 'at all ya gotta do is sock each other. Give the customers a run for their money, see!"

One of the negroes piped up: "Whey's de gloves, mistah?"

The announcer laughed. "Gloves hell! What God give ya fists fer, huh? This ain't no Sunday school meetin'. This is a fight. Come on, boys! Le's get ready! Git yer dukes up now! When the firs' bell is rang, you jus' lay onta the nex' guy, see! Las' man up standin' gets the gran' prize!" He ducked under the ropes and went over to the timekeeper. There was a lull. From the gallery, a voice boomed out, "Let 'er go, shines!" The cry was taken up from the other side of the gallery. Someone in the main floor echoed it. Soon, the whole audience was crying for action. The negroes stood stockstill. Bovine expressions crept into their eyes. Against the white canvas, their glistening black bodies stood out like jet inlaid into marble. Suddenly, the announcer gave the timekeeper a signal. The timekeeper pulled the knotted rope he had been holding. A bell clanged under the platform. Nothing happened. In the ring, like great apes, their arms dangling at their sides, the negroes looked at each other and then stared out into the vast sea of faces.

Somebody pulled the chair from under Sam. He sprawled down to the canvas. The crowd burst out into laughter. Sam arose quickly and looked around. He was mad clear through.

"Who done dat?" he bellowed and he looked around truculently as if to pounce on the nearest man. Somebody in the center of the frightened group pushed somebody else. Somebody else pushed somebody else. A heavy fist flailed through the air and landed with a dull thud on another's jaw. Fists flew like hail. Someone spit blood. Another slipped in it and his flying hands smacked a neighbor in the face. Snorts of rage flew from the fighters. Round and round they milled. Each began to smack the other. Blood streamed from their mouths. Sam found himself in the middle of the fray. He took it easy. Then he fell into a clinch with one of the negroes.

"Tek it easy!" he whispered into the other's ear, tapping him

lightly on the shoulder, meanwhile. They separated. The other clinched with another and informed him to "tek it easy." Soon, the whole group was "tekking it easy." The crowd, noting this drop in the heat of battle, cried out its anger to the fighters. "Fight! fight!" they hollered. Some screamed, "Fake!" Others called, "Take 'em out!" Shortly, the entire audience was crying, "Fake! fake!"

Then, almost as quickly as it had taken them to ease up, the fighters became serious once more. Someone had hit Sam a bit too heavily on the ear. He felt it. It throbbed under his touch and began to puff up. He saw red. Someone had hit him on the ear. It tingled from the blow. Warily, he put his dukes up again and circled around. His eyes alighted on the Big Boy who was still grinning, his teeth agleam with the reflections of the floodlights. Sam slid off a light blow from one, hopped across another who had fallen and, when he had finally maneuvered himself into a position behind the Big Boy, he drew his arm back and with a mighty heave threw his clenched fist into the Big Boy's face. The Big Boy staggered a trifle. He turned and saw only a couple of others who were sparring lightly. Bellowing like a berserk bull, he leapt between the two sparring ones. Right and left, with only two blows, he knocked both of the men down. Both jumped up immediately and rained wild fists onto their nearest neighbors. All forgot their vows to "tek it easy." They became Africans once more. Occasionally, a snarl would come up from the mass, like the snarl of a wild beast at bay. Clothing was torn loose.

The crowd, too, had gone mad. Women, their eyes popping from their sockets, their tongues hanging from their mouths and laving their lips, shrieked themselves hoarse. Men, standing up in their seats and unable to keep their feet still, went through the motions of fighting and danced a wild rigadoon on their chairs. Bedlam broke loose both in and out of the ring. Up in the balcony a dozen small fights had started.

In the ring, three of the combatants had already fallen unconscious to the canvas. Around them milled the other nine, at times grinding the faces of the fallen ones into the resinous surface of the canvas. One weazened negro was worming his way through the fighters and was sniping the others behind the ear with stinging potshots. With each punch delivered, he would back away from the melee and wait for another prospective victim to leave himself wide open. He kept these tactics up until he grew negligent. He

didn't see the Big Boy come rushing up to him. With one powerful swipe, the Big Boy shot out his arm, caught the weazened one in the pit of the stomach and lifted him clear out of the ring over the ropes and into the laps of the excited ringsiders who pushed the whining negro underfoot and concentrated on the murderous onslaughts in the ring.

Only five of the original dozen were left standing. The Big Boy's grin was still spread over his face. He was enjoying himself immensely. So far, with the exception of Sam, none of the others had reached him with a telling blow. Sam was pummelling a light-brown boy whose knees were gradually weakening so that, with each blow that Sam landed on his upturned face, he sank lower and lower until one vicious jab that dislocated the bones in Sam's knuckles sent the yaller boy sobbing into the canvas. Sucking the blood from his bruised fist, Sam found himself attacked in the rear by a tall, gangling, spindly-shanked fellow with a mad, wicked gleam in his eye. The other eye had been completely closed. Having rid himself of the highyaller, Sam now concentrated on spindlyshanks. The thin lad was wiry. Every ounce of him was bone and gristle. Again and again and again Sam punched rights and lefts into the lean one's face while the other directed terrible jabs into Sam's midsection. The thin one's arms continued to jab with machine-like precision into Sam's belly. And, at the same time, Sam continued to shove short, powerful blows into the other's features which were now almost smeared beyond recognition. His nose had been mashed flush with his face and was bleeding. Suddenly as Sam raised his right again to throw it into the gory face again, the spindly one, with a soughing sigh, sank and his knees buckled under him like a broken straw. Sam hadn't even landed the blow at all. The other had simply wilted down.

Four were left battling upright. The Big Boy was engaged in a terrific maulfest with, what appeared to be, a professional who had been rung in to stimulate the lagging fighters. Back and forth the pro's fist sank into the Big Boy's midsection, into his groin, into his face, into his neck, all over. The Big Boy, still grinning, was taking everything that the pro was giving him and more. With a quick sidestep, he stepped away from one of his opponent's haymakers. The pro saw the Big Boy's fist coming at him. But he could do nothing to avoid it, for he was caught off balance by the force of his own unlanded blow. Straight, swift and sure the

Big Boy sent his right fist whanging, whamming into the guts of the pro three inches below his belt buckle. The pro sank to the floor with a wail of anguish. His whole body doubled up into an agonizing knot. His roars reverberated to the rafters until someone's foot caught him squarely under the chin and kicked him into limbo.

At this same moment Sam was just finishing off his own opponent, a short powerfully built negro with shoulders a yard wide. Sam considered. Should he drop now or should he go ahead and try for the extra ten bucks? The moment he began to think of monetary matters his opponent sensed a lapse in his attack and bombarded Sam with a rapid-fire series of blows that sent him sprawling to the floor. At the same moment the Big Boy discovered what he thought to be his last opponent and he bore down on him like a squealing mastodon. On one knee and balancing himself on his knuckles, like a sprinter, Sam watched the two swing blows at each other. He backed himself into a corner and took a series of short deep breaths. Blood was running freely from his right eye. His cheeks were puffed almost to twice their normal size. His right ear was dangling from the side of his head. But through the eye that was not bothered by the blood, Sam saw the Big Boy beating down the third member of the trio. Sam took another deep breath. And when he saw the third one drop he leapt up like a tiger and fell onto the unsuspecting Big Boy.

The Big Boy was taken by surprise. He had thought that he was fighting with his last man and had consequently put his all into downing him. This sudden onslaught of a fresher opponent almost bowled him over. But with his feet set wide apart and with his soles firmly gripping the canvas under foot, he stood opposite Sam who was similarly stanced and exchanged blows with him. The difference between the one who fell and the one who remained was ten dollars, the price of a broad-rimmed Stetson hat. Their eyes vividly demonstrated this difference. Swinging rights and lefts, they banged away at each other, neither relenting an inch, neither daring to allow his gaze to wander from the other's face. Blow after blow landed on each other's body. And with each blow the audience roared itself into hysterics.

Blow after blow.

Roar after roar.

The blood streamed from both the combatants. The sweat

streamed from the faces of the audience. The Big Boy was still trying to grin. Sam was sobbing. The tears coursed down his cheeks and mingled with the blood and sweat which all tasted bitter in his mouth.

Blow after blow.

Roar after roar.

The pair stood and traded blow for blow as the crowd bellowed roar after roar. They could go on swinging forever, it seemed. Nothing could drop these two leviathans of swat. Huge towering hulks of flesh, these two animals tore at each other with their fists shooting up and back like a quartette of pistons. They were wild animals. And the wild animals in the audience lapped their tongues over their chops at the sight of blood, hung onto the edges of their seats and screamed at the tops of their voices in sheer madness. It was over in a second.

One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . five . . . six . . . seven . . . eight . . . nine . . . ten solid blows Sam smashed into the jaw of the Big Boy. And after the third consecutive blow the audience took up the toll and counted each separate smash as it zipped through the air and landed on the Big Boy's chin. The Big Boy's arms thrashed about ineffectively. Three . . . four . . . five . . . six . . . seven . . . eight . . . nine . . . ten. And with the tenth blow the grin on the Big Boy's face slowly contracted.

He dropped like a heavy sack of potatoes.

Sam stared around at the carnage around him. One of the negroes was snivelling in a corner. Two others were moaning into the canvas. The professional had come out of his kick in the jaw and was groaning softly, with his hands clasped around his groin. He had retched and the drool had rivuleted down through the corners of his mouth. A pile of negroes were unconscious in a heap. At his feet Sam saw the prostrate body of the Big Boy. He didn't hear the loud roars of approval that were coming from the crowd. He didn't feel the coins that they were throwing at him. A sickly smile came into his face. The faraway glaze again covered his eyeballs. And in the nimbus that hovered around the floodlights he saw gleaming a brand new twenty-dollar golden eagle.

"Hot diggity dawg!" he cried out. "I gits me a new Stutson hat!"

A Pitcher Grows Tired

by Ashley Buck

Rodkin walked across the field to the clubhouse. Burke and Peck were beside him. The crowd gathered close around and it was difficult to move. They pulled at Rodkin's uniform and slapped his back. Once he had liked that in a crowd. His heart liked it now, but their friendly grasping wore his body to exhaustion. They came to the edge of the field and walked under the bleachers and into the clubhouse. Inside there was an odor of sweat, dust, liniments and steam from the hot showers. Rodkin liked the smell: strong, human, earthly. It was a smell you never forgot and during the long winters when there was no baseball you got lonely for the smell and wanted to bring it back.

The players laughed and hurried to get dressed. They spoke of the splendid game Rodkin had pitched. He wondered if they knew how fortunate he had been. If Blake had known how tired he was he would not have been overanxious. He would have waited. Blake and others would not always be young and inexperienced.

Rodkin did not hurry. He sat down and slowly unlaced his shoes. His hands shook. All the strength was gone from them. Peck spoke to him, low, not wanting anyone else to hear: "You still got plenty of guts. You've always had the heart."

Rodkin kept his eyes on his shoes: "And I have plenty on the ball too."

"Yes," said Peck.

"I can put it anywhere Burke says."

"I know that."

There was a silence. Rodkin slipped off his shirt. The muscles in his shoulders throbbed like hearts. His eyes never met Peck's.

"You got the guts," said Peck. "I never knew you had so much. You looked like a million dollars in there."

"Yeah," said Rodkin.

"And you felt like two cents."

"I was all right."

"You were fine."

Peck moved away. There was a gnawing feeling in Rodkin's chest, a dull pressure at the back of his head.

The players left the building and only the trainer, Rodkin and Joie remained. Rodkin lay upon the table. He closed his eyes and let his body relax. It was a pleasant feeling that brought a soft ache to his stomach. He seemed to sink into nothingness.

"Take it easy," he told the trainer.

"I've taken it easy for years," said Hank.

Hank took more time to rub down Rodkin than he did anyone else. Rodkin knew this. The massaging hurt. Not a painful hurt; only the hurt of wanting to be hurt, wanting the body gently tortured for the relief that came afterward; for the fine feeling after the fingers left the sore spots.

"You and Burke won today's game with your heads," said Hank.

"Yes," said Rodkin.

"Your arm had nothing to do with it," said Hank.

"Burke's smart."

"You're smart too," said Hank. "You've always been smart."

"No one is smarter than Mr. Rodkin," said Joie.

Rodkin opened his eyes. He had forgotten Joie was there. "Forget the Mister, Joie. I'm only one of the players."

"No, you're not."

"You're anything but that," said Hank.

"Why do you call me Mister, Joie?"

"It's like I told you. There are ball players you call by their first names, ball players you call by nick names and then there are the ones you call Mister. You couldn't call them anything else."

"And I'm a Mister?"

"Yes."

"If you had known Ty Cobb, what would he have been?"

"Mister Cobb."

"He was the very best, Joie. There's never been a player as great."

"You're as great a pitcher as he was an outfielder."

A strange look passed between Rodkin and Hank. Rodkin closed his eyes and turned his head away from Joie. He spoke softly: "Thanks, Joie. That's the nicest thing ever said to me. As great as Cobb."

A calmness settled over the clubhouse. The only sound was Hank's hands rubbing Rodkin's body.

Joie sat thinking. He spoke: "Cobb could hit even when he quit baseball, couldn't he, Mr. Rodkins?"

"He was always dangerous. Even at the end his eyes were sharp and few players hit better."

"It was his legs, wasn't it? He wasn't fast anymore?"

"That's right. He wasn't fast. He played his last two years in the outfield on a dime."

"But he could still hit?"

"Always."

"Damn the legs," said Joie. "Damn them!"

"Even at the finish he was beautiful to watch. He had a sixth sense. Speaker had it too. They knew where to play a ball. I've seen them not have to move two feet to take a line drive. Their legs lasted longer than most legs do."

"They were the last word," said Hank. "They had everything."

"Everything," said Rodkin.

"I never saw either of them," said Joie.

"Then you've never seen the outfield played," said Hank. "And if you never saw Sisler, you've never seen first base played either."

"That's right," said Rodkin.

"I've missed those things," said Joie, "but I've seen Mr. Rodkin pitch and that makes up for them."

A silence. Joie walked over to the table and put his hand on Rodkin's back: "How do you feel?"

"Fine."

"You're not tired?"

"No. I'm not tired."

"You pitched a swell game today."

"Thanks, Joie."

"I have to run along. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Yes."

"Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

Hank's hands never left Rodkin's body. His fingers worked in and out between the muscles. Rodkin's tiredness went away.

"O. K.," said Hank.

"O. K.," said Rodkin. He got off the table and began to dress.

"You should have married," said Hank. "A ball player needs a wife."

"I've never been able to find a girl who sees baseball as I do."

"It's not too late."

"Yes it is."

"More women come to the games every day."

"It's a fad," said Rodkin. "Few really like it."

"My wife likes it."

"She's different."

"When you stop winning games Joie's heart will break."

"We all stop sometime," said Rodkin.

Hank spoke, casually, quietly: "Some pitchers pitch years with their heads."

"Yes."

"I've known pitchers who stayed around two and three years that didn't have a thing on the ball—just brains."

"Johnson pitched a long time like that."

"Yeah, and Alexander too," said Hank. "If a pitcher keeps getting smarter and doesn't bear down too hard—except in the pinches—he could stay around as long as Quinn did. He was near fifty before he left the majors."

"He was a spitball pitcher."

"That makes no difference. He had nerve and a head. You have them too."

They looked at each other. Rodkin lowered his eyes. He slipped on his coat. "So long," he said.

"So long," said Hank.

Rodkin walked out of the clubhouse. He wanted to see the park again. He wanted to go back a long way. He stood in deep rightfield and looked across the diamond to home plate. A great stillness lay over the field and stands. There is no lonelier place in the world than a ball park when the crowd has gone and it is cleaned out and in the west the day swiftly dying and nothing remains but a quietness that seems to speak. Inside Rodkin was filled with an emptiness. An aching loneliness started at the pit of his stomach and crept slowly upward past his chest, lingering in his throat. Whenever he spoke of those men a dullness came to him. Once there had been something and now that thing was gone. Once, long ago, he had pitched to those men and now they were no more. He remembered Cobb standing at the plate, kid-

ding him, calling him a dumb rookie. Cobb was nearing the tiring age then. Who was it that said Cobb's only weakness was a walk? It was true anyway.

His eyes went to the green of the outfield. Speaker, Hooper and Cobb were ghosts running swiftly to catch long low drives. Their figures were silhouetted against the blue horizon: satyrs racing gracefully over the fresh spring earth to catch a white ball no larger than their closed hand. They had been great men and great players. Rodkin wanted to pitch to them again, but they had gotten tired and gone away. Their hearts had remained enthusiastic but not their bodies. He too was tired and like them would some day go away. He felt fine after the rubdown, but knew he would not be able to pitch any real ball for four days. Peck would not ask him to pitch until then. Peck was saving him. Rodkin wanted to be saved. Baseball was a part of him and he could not imagine what he would do without it. There is a difference in liking to see it played and in liking to play it. He wanted to play it forever—to pitch big league ball until he died. The great players he loved were gone, but every spring would bring new players and like young Blake some would stay and grow older and become smart, that is, if they had the courage and were thoughtful and listened to what was told them and did not dissipate too much. They would stand before Rodkin with confidence, the crowd roaring or sitting in hushed stillness, and it would be their thinking against his. There would always be young players staring into the sun, dreaming of being as great as Cobb or Sisler, and maybe, one or two would reach that goal and he would then be too old to pitch to them.

And Burke? Burke must be tired. But he wasn't. Not until he straightened up a trifle to throw to second base. He would then be tired and the afternoons seem long and endless. And shortly after that time he would find there was to be no more afternoons. Rodkin never wanted to see that day. . . . To wipe the vision away he sank the palms of his hands against his eye lids.

He moved slowly away. All days wouldn't be like today. He could stay a long time if he pitched with his head. He could stay for another three years—maybe four. He would have to be careful. He would have to be smart.

Everything in the Fifth

by Maxence Van Der Meersch

Frédéric Hallemart, all alone, looked at the little basement room where, before him, so many actors, strolling players, clowns, athletes, and animal trainers had lived in expectation, before offering themselves to the crowd. It was a low nook, arched, a kind of kennel, between enormous brick posts which had to support all the accumulation of benches in circus. A washstand, two iron chairs, two armchairs, a divan where Hallemart was stretching out his naked, hairy, and muscular legs, and in a corner, under a mirror lighted by an electric light, a dainty dressing table, a small piece of slender furniture, loaded with pots, tubes, sticks, tufts and brushes, all the effeminate paraphernalia which is usually used by actresses, and which had not been moved. A red carpet with big flowers hid the pavement of uneven bricks.

On the ceiling ran large tubes, conduits of water, steam, or gas, like the bundles of arteries of the gigantic building whose growling murmur Hallemart could hear above him.

The crowd filled the sides of the stone structure. Exhibition matches, the "hors d'oeuvres," attempted to distract its impatience while waiting for the single match that it wanted: Kid Brown vs. Hallemart.

The narrow little door, with its glass peephole, gently opened. Sulton appeared, smooth-faced, his hair gray, and showing his gold teeth in a vast smile.

"Everything all right? You're ready to fight? How's your legs? Your stomach? You want anything to drink or eat?"

"Come in," said Hallemart. "No, nothing."

The manager came in, and sat down on the edge of the divan.

"I've thought it all out. Give everything you've got about the fifth round, Freddy . . . Your breathing, hey? You know it's your weak point . . . Later would be too long . . . You would lose your power . . . Everything in the fifth . . ."

"Don't worry," said Hallemart.

"It's going to be all right?"

"It has to be all right. It's our big chance . . . Money, engage-

ments, America, the championship. Everything depends on today, you know it well enough."

"Yes . . . But what a business! If we win the land of the dollars! The press for us! Contracts! The movies! Everything. . . . Everything. . . . My boy, I'm telling you! If you can knock him down in the fifth round, and look out for his left . . ."

Someone had just knocked at the door. It opened. A young, blonde woman, her hair curled on her forehead halo style, very slender in a long coat of white ermine, appeared and stopped, smiling.

"Can I come in?"

Sulton was scowling.

"Of course," said Hallemart.

"I've come to bring you courage."

"You're sweet . . . thanks . . . it's nice of you."

"To tell you we all count with all our hearts on this victory! You understand?"

"Yes . . . Yes . . . I have to . . . I understand . . . You're going, Sulton?"

"I'll leave you," growled Sulton, going out.

The door slammed behind him.

"He's like that," explained Hallemart. "More nervous that I am."

"You know all your friends are counting on your triumph?"

"Yes. Yes."

"I want this victory for you!"

"I hope too that . . ."

"Think of the future it will assure you."

She looked at him. She wore a strange half smile.

"America, glory, fortune! a beautiful dream to live!"

"And that you promised to live with me, Paule."

She sat down beside him, in the place Sulton had left. Hallemart took her hand. She drew it away. Again she smiled.

"We'll see, we'll see . . . Today will decide . . . But I have lots of confidence. It will be you who will show me New York. Do you know that my cabin is engaged on the *Ile de France?*"

"Already?"

"Already! That's to say that I definitely count on this victory. I must have it."

"And I'll bring it to you this evening!" said Hallemart.

She got up. He wanted to hold her.

"So soon, Paule? Just one minute."

But she evaded him and slipped outside. She opened the door. She blew him a kiss with her pink fingers.

"Tomorrow . . . Tomorrow."

And she disappeared.

Hallemart sat down again. He sighed. He looked at his fists.

He opened and shut his hands, that massive joining of bone, tendons, and flesh, those hands that soon would win glory, money, love. America, escape, far from chains, his wife, his household . . . A new world, liberty for years . . . And Paule!

He had been married for ten years. Jeanne Hallemart, the companion of his early hours, had shared the anguish, the trials, the early privations with him. Hallemart looked at her only as a maternal friend, complaisant, attached to him like a faithful dog. He had nothing but a rather distant tenderness for her now, in which memories and pity entered more than love.

During the six months that he had known Paule Miserand, he had been bewilderingly smitten.

He did not know too much about this woman's past, a wife profitably divorced from a big English industrialist. She had overpowered him. Her elegance, her chic, her allure, her language, all the tricks of a woman who has known the world, and has acquired a dazzling polish, fascinated Hallemart. She herself, more than she would have wished, submitted to the ascendancy of this great fellow, simple, worn, taciturn, but who did not pass by unperceived, who represented all the same, in his sphere, an energy, a will, a force. And now two recent fights had caused to converge on Hallemart the projectors of reality, making him a star, the press shouting his name to all the echoes, putting him up as the future champion of the world. In this adventure Paule Miserand ended by being a victim, and was caught herself.

She was leaving France in a month. If he won tonight they would leave together. Hallemart would have exhibitions, matches, movies, for two years over there. He would leave his wife, Jeanne, alone here. She was already warned. And he didn't admit, even to himself, his inner secret intention of never returning to Europe.

Overhead, a hollow, confused growling arose. The crowd.

Hallemart looked at the time. Still seventeen minutes! It would be long, that wait.

A confused mob jammed itself against the vast sides of the stone circus. The crowd was besieging the Coliseum. Privileged people could scarcely open up a passageway. People indulged in an extraordinary trade of tickets, they wagered, they argued. Announcers yelled out the losers and coming matches, without anyone paying any attention. Hallemart was being quoted at three to one.

In the midst of the cries, the arguments, the comments, Jeanne Hallemart crept with difficulty, slowly advancing toward the circus. She had not said she was coming. Usually she never was present at her husband's fights. This time she had come by stealth.

She listened to all these people talking of Hallemart, discussing him, appreciating him, comparing him with his rival. She felt people had confidence in him. And she no longer knew whether she was happy or heartbroken. At heart she would have wished defeat for her husband. If a conqueror, she well knew she would lose him. Vanquished, humiliated, held close to her, attached again to her by defeat, perhaps she could reconquer him. Then she thought of the crushing, the suffering of her beaten husband. And she no longer knew what she wanted.

The circus was immense and circular, resembling a vast basin in which the crowd was boiling. In the center of the very high ceiling, supported by slender cast iron columns and drowned in a dusty vapor so dense that it was no longer visible, there hung, here and there, metal reflectors, from which spread out over the tumultuous swarm, large livid patches of light cut into zones of penumbra, where heaps of people tossed about. Exactly in the center, small, strangely shrunken in the middle of the enormous edifice, was the squared ring, spread round with ropes, and bathed in an intense white light by arc lamps. Sitting up in the four corners were cameras, pointed like guns, which were menacing this block house draped in tri-color hangings. Half hidden behind a column, as if she feared that Hallemart would see her, Jeanne waited, her head empty, her ears buzzing from the monotonous and deafening grumbling that filled the place.

There was a sudden clamor. Everybody got up, howling and gesticulating. She no longer saw anything. She did not feel strong enough to get up as did the others. She stayed there, behind the column, so upset as to be almost fainting. And in a few seconds,

when silence rendered the multitude mute and fixed, she dared to reopen her eyes, lean over a little, and look.

Yonder, in the little square, in the swelling light which cut the penumbra that bathed the amphitheatre, two silhouettes, one white, the other black, watched each other, circled, flung out a fist, drew back, and returned, with the caution of two cats watching each other. Around them came and went the referee, in flannel trousers and a Lacoste shirt. The fight had begun.

Hallemart, agile, revolved around his adversary, as though trying to discover his weak point. Kid Brown, small and heavier, firmly planted on his massive legs, his round torso dented by the muscles jutting out under the brown skin, contented himself with facing forward, parrying, escaping, almost without moving from his place. Stiff, her hands convulsed on the arms of her seat, Jeanne, silent and suspended like all the crowd, followed every move of the two men. This waiting prolonged itself during the first round. Then the gong rang, breaking the magic which had held back the shouts and whistles. And suddenly, the noise of conversations, discussions, arguments, while the two boxers rested, each one sitting in his corner, and watching the other with a furtive eye, or looking out at the crowd.

At the moment Jeanne recognized her rival, near the ring in the middle of the fashionable young men and women. In a décolleté evening gown, Paule Miserand, with a corsage of roses less fresh than she, was in triumph like a happy young queen. She must have been sure of victory. No pang, no uneasiness darkened her smile. From her place she waved a handkerchief of embroidered linen toward Hallemart, who was searching for her with his eyes.

Hatred, jealousy, sorrow, deluged the heart of Jeanne Hallemart with a sudden flood. She was suddenly and intensely aware, with a violence and precision she had never known up to now, of everything that this treason and abandonment meant to her, this Calvary that would begin after the fight. She understood better what she was going to lose—what this woman was going to take away from her—and how she had come to assist at the crashing of her own happiness. . . . And, looking at her husband getting up to enter upon the second round, she thought and wished with all her might:

"Let him lose! my God! let him lose!"

Already the two men were at it, fighting brutally hand to hand. Breaking away suddenly, they closed again. The referee ran up, waving his hands. Hallemart received a left to the liver, tottered. Everybody shouted. Already he resumed the offensive. And ten seconds later, a short right hook, heavy, hard, launched with all the force of the shoulder and body, reached the jaw of Kid Brown whose guard was low, and literally threw him to the mat in a heap.

Under a tempest of yells the referee counted out the seconds. Kid Brown got up at six, tired, reeling, his eyes haggard. He hesitated a second, head down like a buffalo mad with fury. One no longer saw anything but the two bodies pressed together, tied each to each, and hammering each other with terrible, short blows. Jeanne, stiff, biting her handkerchief, forgetting everything, saw nothing but this narrow rectangle where two men were fighting. And the crowd around her, panting, electrified, groaned hollowly at each blow, as if everybody suffered and struck with the two.

"Break! Break!" cried the referee, without succeeding in tearing them apart.

They were no longer masters of themselves. The gong didn't separate them. The referee made them give way, beating them apart by forcibly throwing himself between them.

During the interval, Sulton whispered his advice to Hallemart, who nodded his head.

The manager was right in counseling him to hurry, to profit by his advantage. The same violence marked the third round from its start. Kid Brown, thrown into the ropes, hammered Hallemart's sides, and he, with head lowered, guarded his chin with his open left hand, and sought to strike the Kid directly in the solar plexus with his right. The crowd yelled. The referee was able to bring the two adversaries back into the middle of the ring for an instant. But Hallemart again knocked about the Black, pursued him, blockaded him in a corner. Kid Brown, bent in two, his fists in front of his face, slunk away. Again they came back to the center. And again, the same right hook to the jaw threw Kid Brown to the floor.

He stayed there, panting.

"One, two, three, four . . ." counted the referee, marking the numbers with a gesture.

Kid Brown stayed on the floor, clumsily moving his arms and legs like a drunken man. And the panting crowd, standing up, looked on from afar, with a cry saluting each effort, each move-

ment of the little black silhouette, spread out on its back, rocking its head from side to side, and painfully moving its limbs like a big, stunned insect.

"Five, six, seven, eight . . ." counted the referee.

And just at this point, the gong saved the Black.

In the middle of a deafening uproar, Jeanne Hallemart sat down again. Finished! It was finished! She wept. Around her, fever over-excited the crowd.

"Kid Brown's done for!"

"That right-handed blow, splendid!"

"He won't last two more rounds!"

"I told you so . . ."

"He'll be licked, and not on points. A knock-out!"

"It's over!"

"And before three rounds!"

"Provided that the Black doesn't give up too soon . . ."

"It's too short! We're being robbed . . ."

"Donkey! You're talking"

Standing near the ring, she saw her rival, motioning, waving her hand, exulting, triumphing. She hated this woman, this robber of joy . . . to whom all happiness came . . . on whom fortune was again going to smile, sacrificing an unhappy woman. And she saw how much, up to the present, she had hoped in spite of all to keep her husband, to see him come back to her, conquered and humiliated, returned to wisdom and reason . . . It was finished now, all the acts had been played.

Hallemart certainly wanted to finish it. He attacked fiercely. Kid Brown, a little restored but frightened, shielded himself, drew back. It became a chase. Cat calls were heard. Twice a hook to the ear made the Negro stagger. People laughed, booed. Someone cried:

"Not so fast! Hallemart! Not so fast!"

Hallemart was becoming enervated. This pursuit winded him. He was able to block the Black in a corner, attack him face to face, let fly a direct blow from the right to the full jaw. The Negro tottered, remained upright. Then, with all his might, Hallemart launched another blow with his left. And suddenly he was heard to howl, he drew back, took his left hand in his right, grimaced with suffering. The whole amphitheatre stood up with a single cry.

Kid Brown, weary, was still standing by a miracle of energy, like a bull waiting for the blow of the hammer. He must have under-

stood. He returned to Hallemart and took the offensive. And Hallemart, in his turn, drew back, ran away, and evaded him. Twice Kid Brown's right struck his left hand which was open to block, and a grin of pain was visible on Hallemart's face. He didn't dare use his arm any more. He parried with his right as well as he could, uncovering his face. And Kid Brown pounded his cheeks, his nose, his eyes, his mouth . . .

Between the rounds a bubbling rose in the crowd. They argued. A broken wrist? Sprained? What was going to happen? Abandon the fight? Kid Brown's victory? Bets were again taken up furiously. A brawl broke out behind Jeanne Hallemart. Lost, upset, bent forward, she watched the distorted face of her husband, reading there his suffering and despair. His arms crossed, panting, he shook his head at Sulton, who was feeling his forearm and speaking to him in a low voice. At the gong he went toward his adversary and tried two or three terrible right hooks, without success. The other saw his advantage, attacking him on the left, always the left, aiming at his face which Hallemart covered only with his right hand. In a minute Hallemart's face, swollen, puffy, cut open, bleeding, was opened up in large splinters of flesh. He parried clumsily, seeking a clinch, was rebuked by the referee. In the sixth round they began to whistle at him. He was enervated, uncovered, was sent to the mat for eight seconds, got up, blind, spitting blood, to fall in the ropes under a swing. He hung there like a rag. There was a concert of protestations, whistlings, booings. Hallemart raised his broken fist, showing it in vain to the pitiless mob. Unchained, it now wanted his defeat, his crushing. It applauded each blow that felled him, like a drunken woman whom the sight of blood finishes by glutting. It laughed when the Black's fist crushed his lip, cut his brow, tore from him a howl of rage and suffering. He wept! He sniffled from blood and from tears. Furtively, on the back of his glove he wiped his face, besmeared with tears, sweat and blood. And Jeanne wept with him, forgetting her spite, her own sorrow, her suffering as a wronged and abandoned wife, everything she had feared from this victory. She thought of it no more. She no longer saw anything but her husband, her poor Frédéric, her great, beloved boy, who was suffering, who was going to be beaten, and who would not raise himself above it. And to spare him this despair, she offered a sacrifice. She begged:

"Let him win! my God! Let him win! Let him go away with

her, but let him win! Anything for him! Anything so he'll be happy. I'll accept everything. I'll renounce everything."

She well knew now that she could not build joy on the unhappiness of this man, and that miserable, abandoned, betrayed, she would be happy again, if he were happy.

He returned to renew the combat. He stood it two minutes more, beaten, pounded, and standing, offering himself to the blows, sustained by who knows what formidable obstinacy, not to fall, to stay upright, like a target offered to the Black's blows. He didn't even parry them any more. He was now only a benumbed thing, worn, with no other thought than to last, to hold himself erect. Sulton threw in the sponge. He didn't even see it. He still advanced on Brown. They had to intervene and stop him, lead him away like a sleepwalker, dull, stupid, looking at his broken left fist, while a giant clamor filled the vault of the circus in honor of Kid Brown.

Paule Miserand, standing, a little pale and biting her red lips, went out in the middle of her court, vexed and smiling. Jeanne lost sight of her in the crowd, and did not see her again. Already she no longer thought of her rival. She slipped through the crowd, found a taxi, and flew to the clinic to find her beaten husband, and since she hadn't been able to offer her happiness to him as a sacrifice, to console him, took half the cross for her.

My Life with a Stuffed Sailfish

by Robert Warner

If Andrew Jackson hadn't waded in and attached Florida to the Union there would now be an awful depression in the warehouse industry. To the man who introduced hobnails and cigar butts to the White House floors, the storage business owes a debt it will never pay. Warehouses put up a wide variety of stuff: baby carriages, bureaus for the maid's room, photoengravings, moth-eaten deer heads, and so on. These articles, which come from all over the United States, are good but transient—in other words no staying power. Baby carriages are hauled out and employed for more babies, the bureaus go up to Yale, photoengravings are given to a nice old aunt in St. Louis, and deer heads wind up in barber shops with sad expressions in their glass eyes and hats on their antlers. Dependable is what these things are not; they're like railroad securities, they come and go and eventually—like a bat out of hell—they're gone forever. So if you're a banker preparing to make a loan on one of these gaunt edifices there's only one way to be absolutely safe: go through it and count the stuffed sailfish. When one of these Palm Beach to Miami creatures passes into storage he's there for good—as much a part of the place as the dust on the basement floor.

The day George got back from Florida and came piling into my office rubbing his hands together and saying, "Ahh!" I prepared to explain this to him because I saw right away what had happened. They're always like that at first—as though they've just swallowed the canary, or wrung a dictator's neck.

I said, "George, did you content yourself with having the damned thing photographed?"

He sat on the corner of my desk and took a deep breath. "Listen, Harry, wait till I tell you—"

"Don't," I said, "I already know. You caught a sailfish and are going to have it stuffed."

He said, "Gosh! How'd you hear about it? Of course, the papers. Know what I'm going to do? I'm going to give it to Edith

for Christmas. Boy, won't she be surprised? She doesn't even know it's being mounted."

I nodded. "She'll be surprised all right. That's one thing you can count on. If you live from now till the sun turns into an ice cube you'll never forget the look that's going to spread itself over Edith's face when you inform her that instead of getting that winter coat she's after she's to be presented with a stuffed fish. Even now when I remember breaking the news to Katharine it makes me feel as though I'd just fallen out the window."

"Oh!" he said, in a very dejected manner. "So you caught one too? I suppose yours was a small one."

I sighed. "If only it had been. Believe me when you have a thing like that pursuing you through life every inch is something to remember. Unfortunately mine is seven feet ten. I suppose yours is too. As far as I can find out they're all seven feet ten except when caught by Ernest Hemingway and Zane Grey. It must be the stock size."

"Know how many times mine jumped?" he inquired.

I said, "It's not important—at least not as long as it didn't have the decency to jump off the hook and stay where it belonged."

George said, "You should have seen the last run he made. I had him right up alongside—"

"I know," I interrupted, "When he took one look at you and the boat and turned around and hauled out a quarter of a mile of line. They always do it; it's in their contract."

"Captain said he'd never seen anything like it in all the years he'd been going out. Said when it swung around and started out to sea that way he'd have given fifty to one odds against my catching it."

I groaned. "Those were my captain's exact words. And after that, when they have you thinking that what you really ought to do is go on a lecture tour and write books about yourself, they rush you in and introduce you to the taxidermist who tells you your fish is one of the finest specimens he's ever seen and would you mind letting him have it for the Museum of Natural History. At that instant it comes over you that the one thing you can't do is part with this acquisition, whereupon you sign up for a Grade A mounting job. You then get your fish hung up and have a lot of pictures taken at a dollar per while they go on home and divide up the spoils. George, for goodness' sakes wire that guy you're

about to file a petition for bankruptcy and ask him if he'll settle for twenty bucks and keep the fish."

"Look," said George, handing me a photograph of himself and catch. "What do you think of it? Pretty good, don't you agree?"

"Magnificent," I agreed. "Now then, the thing to do is to have it made into a Christmas card and send it to everyone you know, and stop there. It's enough. If you don't believe it ask my wife, or your wife, or ask the man who owns one."

He put his hands behind his head and gazed up at the ceiling. "I suppose the best place for it will be on the north wall."

"You mean," I inquired, "The one where the portrait of Edith's grandfather now hangs? I suppose she'll be pretty happy when you tell her that picture has to go in the closet."

George said, "It is kind of a problem. If the picture weren't so darned big we might put it in the bedroom."

"Why don't you cut it in half?" I suggested. "You could throw the legs away and just keep the top part. Or better still, you might slide the whole thing under the bed. Then when Edith wanted to show it to someone she could get down on her hands and knees and use a flashlight."

George said, "By the way, Harry, do these taxidermist guys demand the whole hundred and twenty-five bucks on delivery?"

I shook my head. "No indeed, they're very obliging. I took six months with mine. Matter of fact it's a good idea to pay for 'em catch as catch can—kind of gets you warmed up to your life's work."

"What do you mean, life's work?" he asked.

"You surely didn't think the stuffing bill was the end of it? That's just an introduction to the business. There's the express charge—fifteen dollars. Then you discover the plaster isn't strong enough to hold your glass-eyed friend so you have to have a carpenter come in and do all kinds of stuff to the wall. He charges you six dollars and when you move he comes back and charges you twenty more to make the place the way it used to be. On top of that he gets fourteen for building a crate so you can move your piscatorial pal and have him arrive in one piece."

George said, "I wish Edith hadn't put those chartreuse curtains in the living room. Chartreuse and blue . . . Hmm! Perhaps it'll work though."

"And there's your Louis XIV furniture," I added. "Nothing like a stuffed sailfish to set off plush and gilt."

"Oh, by the way, Harry, there's another thing I wanted to ask you. How much ceiling height do you need? Our living room's only ten feet."

"That's plenty," I assured him. "That'll put his tail about three inches above the sofa. And if it's not enough you can bore a hole in the ceiling and have him sheathe his sword. We only had nine feet in our first apartment."

"How'd you work it?" he asked.

"Easy. We kept the fish in a vacant apartment. Only cost us two dollars a month."

George laughed. "Just wait till Charley Wade sees it. Boy, oh boy! Him and his five-pound brown trout." He reached out and retrieved the photograph of himself and fish and gazed at it as though he and the fish were planning to be married on the first of the month. Then he climbed off the desk. "So long," he said. "I suppose I'd better go do some work."

"Nice to have seen you, George. And listen, old man, I really am sorry. By the way, better let me give you the name of that warehouse; they'll board your fish for ten cents a month less than anyone else in the city."

"Did you know they have to paint them entirely by hand?" he asked. "The minute they die they lose their color."

I said, "Yes, I know." A couple of minutes later I glanced up and saw him in the outer office. He was showing his photograph to the girl at the information desk.

The Rumbold 500

by Maxence Van Der Meersch

In the grass alongside the road, propped up on its stand, the Rumbold 500 waited.

It was a heavy motorcycle, covered with red enamel and chromium, solid, triangular, with a short, bomb-shaped tank, and low handlebars reversed, sticking out forward like the horns of a bull; two sawed-off nickel tubes ran straight back like two jets of flame, to spit out the exhaust gas.

The wheels were high and narrow, mounted with thin tires. No mudguard, nothing but a round piece of black tin, inscribed with the number 23. The fat slanting cylinder butted head and valve-heads into the wind.

Even while motionless, the Rumbold 500 suggested speed, suggested some short, trapped beast, ready to smash ahead like a projectile.

A man came out in front of the judge's stand, and waved a flag. Ribières threw his cigarette into the grass, got up, and pushed his machine to the starting-line. Other cyclists came alongside of him, in front, and behind. About fifty altogether. There was a fine clear sun, still rather pale, an early spring sun. Banners and flag snapped in the wind. The stands on the right were filled with a multi-colored mass of spectators. On the left, strung the refreshment kiosks. High across the road swelled canvas signs in praise of motor oils and accessories.

Ribières had mounted the Rumbold. His body was one with the machine. The low saddle, entrenched between motor and rear wheel, gave him plenty of support. His knees and calves hugged the tank, flattening the leather knee-guards, holding the machine in their grip as a rider masters his horse. And Ribières' two fists clutched the curving handlebars, holding the iron beast under control, conquered like a thrown steer.

A minute, thirty seconds, fifteen seconds—foot on starter, Ribières waited. Around him, his opponents, their faces heavy under their helmets.

A grinding, tearing sound filled the air. Fifty machines rolled

forward. Only one late starter remained in front of the judges, furiously kicking his recalcitrant machine.

In the howling dust, Ribières shifted his speeds. First up to twenty-five, gears into second speed, and the lunge forward. The throaty roar of the Rumbold, up to seventy. Shift again, the quick cough of the motor, and then the straight, even pulse.

Ribières settled into his saddle, slapped the accelerator, touched the brake, checked his compression, glanced at the oil gauge. Everything going fine. He felt good at the prospect of three hours on the wheel, under the clean sun, the engine smooth, the machine well in hand. He quickly got up to ninety-five, a hundred, a hundred-five.

At the end of the long straight stretch, past the stands, was the Glamard turn. Ribières cut his gas, braked, felt his machine take the angle, and bent out to counterbalance; slowly; he pulled the Rumbold back to level, and accelerated.

The needle went up again, ninety-five, a hundred, a hundred five. In speedy crescendo, the Rumbold burned up the steep hill that came after the Glamard turn, leaving behind a string of opponents as it shot down the other side.

Far ahead of him, Ribières saw a cluster of riders; he drove in pursuit. They took the little bridge over the river, dove into the Bargin woods, disappeared. He accelerated. Over the bridge at a hundred five, thundering through the woods, getting into the clear just in time to see the others disappear in the distance, making the turn at la Chapelle. And he had to brake, slow down. The road was impossible, for the three kilometers between Bargin and la Chapelle.

He took the la Chapelle turn nicely, bending the Rumbold out to the right, throwing himself out to the left, making an acute angle out of himself and the engine. It was an S curve. Right, left, and right again. He came out of it at forty-five, saw the long, straight line of stands in front of him again, and the fleeing cluster ahead. He shifted back into second, for swifter pickup. Passing in front of the stands, he was going at a hundred twenty, and was no more than three hundred meters behind the group. Flying past his headquarters, he glanced at the sign they were holding out for him. He read his time, eleven minutes, and his average for the first time over the course—eighty-five.

He caught up with the gang at the Glamard turn, wove through

it on the upgrade of the hill, and shot down with two infuriated cyclists hanging onto his rear wheel. He made the bridge, the woods, the three kilometers of rotten road, and was at the turn of la Chapelle again. This time he tried it in second, got through faster, came out at fifty. And when he shot into the straightaway, in front of the stands, a glance behind reassured him. The two riders were several lengths back. He pushed after another cluster. The sign in front of his stand said 10:20, with an average of ninety kilometers an hour.

He rode that way for an hour, without tiring, with no more incident than a few short battles, wheel to wheel, as he passed one rider after another. The wind, that compact mass of air he speared into, howling in his ears, the dizzying vibration of the motor, the formidable, monotonous snoring of the exhaust, all this was gradually deafening him, thickening his senses, until he was driving the Rumbold automatically, almost by reflex. He began to feel the road and the turns "in his hands." The Rumbold varied no more than five centimeters, each time around the curves and the grades.

After an hour and a half of this, he was in third place, behind 18 and 42. He filled up with gas again, asked how far behind the leader he was, and banged off. Suddenly, directly in front of him, 42 stopped, so forcibly halted by a stuck piston that the rear wheel, absolutely blocked, cut a line into the road. Then he passed 18 on the straightaway, in front of the stands. He didn't see it again.

He circled the course twice, out in front. Then, on the hill beyond the Glamard turn, he heard something growling behind him; augmenting. A motor passed him.

He recogniged little Gouriez, mounted on his huge Narvac 500 motorcycle.

The Narvac was fast enough. Ten meters behind, Ribières gave his machine all it had, and yet couldn't catch up to the Narvac. In the Bargin woods, he was going a hundred forty. He made an entire round in nine minutes fifteen seconds, another in eight minutes forty-five. His average speed was up to a hundred three. He cursed. Twenty meters, ten, five meters in front of him, but still in front of him, went Gouriez, doubled down over his Narvac, hugging it with all his body, his little head with its huge round helmet barely sticking up above the handlebars. And he simply couldn't catch up. In the straightaways, the Rumbold gained

ground. But in the turns, the Narvac scraped the pavement, angled with almost unbelievable daring, and escaped, taking twenty meters again. The chase started all over. They made one entire round of the course, wheel to wheel, bar to bar, flashed like meteors in front of the stands, with the crowd going mad.

And on the hill after the Glamard turn, Ribières passed Gouriez, taking the lead.

Glued to the machine, his teeth clenched, he rode the Rumbold like a living thing, calling upon it for every ounce of effort. The machine snorted like a horse, hot, sweating oil, leaping forward, checking suddenly at the master's touch on the brakes, trembling, and leaping forward again at a single bound. The overheated oil was a poor lubricant. Every few minutes, Ribières worked the auxiliary pump, mounted on the bars. In a black cloud, the Rumbold would revive. But then she began to knock. He had to slow down, losing part of the lead. To make up for that, he took the three kilometers between the woods and la Chapelle at full speed, flying over the jagged road so fast that he didn't notice the bumps. He wanted to look back for Gouriez, but that meant losing a second. He was in the S-turn of la Chapelle, going eighty. He didn't want to brake it.

He made the first turn, with the Rumbold bent to the right, so low that his footrests scraped the road. He pulled her up violently, and threw her to the left. She went over to the very edge of the ditch, biting the grass, almost throwing him, but by doubling with super-human effort, he was able to get her up on the road again. At that instant, as he was bending her to the right to shoot into the straightaway, there was a single, terrific wrench, and the Rumbold zig-zagged, the front wheel vibrating violently. The wheel nearly sprang out of his hands, swinging back and forth, while the maddened machine whirled through a series of S-turns, at terrifying speed. Ribières hung on by his knees. He thought he felt himself hurled into the air, felt death engulfing him . . . He never knew how he came to find himself seated, a second later, with his hands on the bars, still going at ninety down the straightaway.

Only when he felt the sweat all over him did he realize how frightened he had been. He tested his brake—nothing wrong there. He glanced at his front wheel—the tire was still full up. The machine was not to blame. It was his own fault. He had tried to come out of the turn too fast.

The Narvac passed him on the next curve. Something stronger than his own will forced Ribières to brake and slow down for the turn.

He went after Gouriez again. Passed him on the hill, held his lead all the way to the turn at la Chapelle. Then the same reflex seized him, forced him to slow down. The Narvac passed him once more.

He was furious. Now he knew what fear was like, that power, stronger than one's self, that took over one's being, canceled will, took direct charge of one's very muscles. He could command himself, reason with himself—but fear held his hands.

Before the S-turn, in spite of himself, he re-lived that horrible lurch of the handlebars, that ramming kick of the Rumbold. And he braked her. In the straightaway he made up his loss, tailed Gouriez, only to lose another hundred meters on the next turn.

Starting the last round, they passed the stands once more knee to knee, glued, wedded to their machines, shot ahead like parallel bullets, going at a hundred and fifty kilometers an hour. Gradually, the Rumbold sneaked a wheel ahead, a length ahead, five meters, ten meters . . . And once more, at the Glamard turn, Gouriez caught up and took over the lead. Ribières ran in his track. The two engines, like stubby monsters, devoured the hill, their growls shaking the sky; they flew down the other side, over the bridge, through the woods. The loudspeakers kept up incessantly:

"Gouriez still in the lead. Ribières, ten meters."

"Narvac and Rumbold wheel to wheel . . ."

"They're taking the turn at la Chapelle . . ."

"The Rumbold loses a length."

Ribières saw the space between himself and Gouriez widening. The reckless fool was taking the curve without braking. His machine swung down kissing the road, graceful, oblique, like the sweep of a wing. There was only the flattening of the front wheel to show the terrific pressure of centrifugal force. Five meters behind, Ribières saw the front wheel pressed to the verge of explosion. In his arms, he still felt that sudden, savage revolt of his own machine. It was impossible to get away with what Gouriez was doing there. He'd spill. He'd have to spill. Now—now—he was spilling! With all his being, Ribières wanted, hoped for, demanded that crash.

A stallion leap, a series of S-turns . . . Gouriez flung into the

air, the bucking machine running wild, bars broken, slamming into a tree . . . Then a huge spurt of flame.

Ribières was past it all, flying toward the stands. He broke the tape just as the ambulance started out.

Champagne, flowers, handshakes, cheers, interviews . . . Ribières let himself be dragged toward his quarters, in the midst of a joyous tumult in which he simply could not take part. One thought submerged everything else in his being. The memory of those few seconds at the S-turn.

"Glad you won?"

"Where is your next race?"

"Who are you riding for next?"

He answered mechanically. The form of Gouriez doubled over his machine, bending in the turn, the sudden leap of the motorcycle, the body hurled into the air, that spurt of flame—all this rose before him with such intense clarity that his very muscles contracted, in horror at himself, in shame. "I wanted that! I hoped for it! I willed it!"

He had to show his face to the cameras. It was drawn, tight. He could barely pull up his lips for a smile.

"Back to town, now! You're due to broadcast."

He was pushed into a car. The huge limousine nosed its way through the crowd. Now they were on the road to the city. There were reporters in the car, they kept asking him questions, taking notes.

"What about Gouriez?" Ribières suddenly asked.

No one knew. He had been taken to the Claude-Bernard Hospital. That was all anyone could tell.

Just how much am I to blame? Ribières kept asking himself. Just how much am I responsible? I wished that crash on him, I wished it with everything in me. I hated him, that moment. If he hadn't crashed, I'd still hate him, I'd carry that hate . . . It took that accident to make me realize my thoughts, my wish, were criminal. If it were not for the accident, I'd never have known.

Now he had the strange, terrible feeling of being personally responsible, guilty of the accident. It was as if a wish so strong, so savage as he had felt must have forced itself upon destiny, pushed fate over the borderline of hesitation.

If he dies, he asked himself, can I ever feel peace again?

The car stopped. They were in the France-Radio station.

"I want to telephone," Ribières said.

He got the Claude-Bernard Hospital."

"Gouriez? Yes, he's here," an interne answered. Nothing serious. No. A broken rib, contusions, nothing serious."

"Thanks, thanks," Ribières said.

He hung up, and turned toward the reporters. He was beaming.

They dragged him to the microphone. "Hurry up. They're waiting. Are you satisfied now?"

"Yep. Satisfied. God! I thought he was dead!"

"Well—that wouldn't have been your fault—"

"I know it. I know it." Then he added something that none of them understood. "But I never would have forgiven myself."

The Parmachene Bell

by Edwin L. Peterson

"Nevertheless, here I must part with you; here in this now sad place, where I was so happy as first to meet you; but I shall long for the ninth of May; for then I hope again to enjoy your beloved company, at the appointed time and place."—IZAAK WALTON

OLD SOLOMON was a fisherman and a fly tier. He was a gunsmith, too, and had traveled with Buffalo Bill on the Keith Circuit. To the boys, he was a romantic figure, dim and heroic as Robin Hood and Jesse James. Our fathers used to say that no one in the country could tie artificial flies better than Solomon. Sometimes when you looked at them, it seemed as though they would take wing and flutter into the dusty air of Solomon's shop.

My mother did not quite approve of Solomon. Few mothers did. They said he was "given to drink." One afternoon, though, when my mother and I were downtown, I coaxed her until she promised to stop at Solomon's shop. I was seven then, and I wanted her to see Solomon in all his glory.

A bell above the door tinkled as we went in. The air smelled of Hoppe's Number Nine and varnish and dust. There were old chairs and tables covered with revolvers, shotguns, and fishing rods, and there were four or five bicycles, too, for Solomon repaired our bikes, as well as our fathers' guns.

We stayed at the door awhile. Solomon pretended he did not know we were there. He sat hunched over a bench, an electric bulb above him throwing a pyramid of dusty light down on his long, white hair. I went over and watched him. He was tying flies. My mother stayed close to the door.

"What you doin', Sol?" Of course I knew, but it seemed proper to ask.

"I'm liken to make a Yellow Sally," he said, without looking up from his vise.

"Gee, she's a pretty one," I said.

"Sure she's pretty, but she ain't no good," said Sol.

I heard my mother cough, but I did not know why. The cough meant that I should come to her.

"What's that one?" I asked, pointing to a fly on the table. It was best, I thought, to ignore my mother's cough.

"Thaten?" said Sol. "That's the Parmachene Belle." His voice stopped, then went on. "She ain't no good either."

The name stuck in my mind. It was mysterious and significant, like the Rocky Mountains and Queen Aliquippa and Lief the Lucky.

"Why you like to make 'em, Sol, if they ain't any good?" I asked.

Then he looked up at me. His pale blue eyes looked through my head, looked back through the years. "They're fer old-timers," he said slowly, "old-timers like me an' yer dad. Someday, mebbe you, too."

"Huh?" I said.

"Folks buy 'em," he said, looking back at his vise, "jest 'cause they're purty."

Once again I heard my mother cough.

I pointed quickly and asked, "What's that one, Sol?"

"Her? Next to that Lord Baltimore? She's jest a Flight's Fancy."

Then I heard my mother's voice. "Son!" it said. It said other things, too, by implication.

"Guess I gotta be goin', Sol," I said, but he did not look up.

The bell tinkled again and we were outside.

"I never did think much of that man," my mother said. Her voice was grim.

I felt unhappy and started to tell her what a nice man Solomon was, but she only said, "Humph!"

When we got down near the hardware store, she said, "Who was he talking about?"

"Talkin' about? No one, Mother. Honest."

"No one honest, is right," she said contemptuously. "Where'd he get those names if he wasn't talking about anyone?"

"What names, Mother?"

"Humph!" she said.

"What names?" I persisted.

"Lord Baltimore!" she said.

II

But that was not the end. By the fifteenth of April, I was eight years old. In the cold before dawn, we were speeding along the highway towards Shade Creek. I was in the back seat. Between me and the misty blur from the headlights were the blackness of Solomon's big hat and the red glow of my father's cigarette.

The car swerved from the highway, and we bumped over the rocks and ruts of another road. Soupy Campbell had caught a trout once, but it was just an accident. They had been on a picnic and he had used ham for bait. That was not right. That was something I should never do. My father had explained it all.

When we got out of the car, it was still dark. We put our rods together and threaded them. I leaned mine against the car. This was important. What if I should put the reel on backwards? Solomon would laugh, and my father would be ashamed.

"All ready, boy?" my father asked.

"Yes, sir," I said, and we started down the logging road.

They walked ahead of me: Solomon six feet two; my father six feet one, heroes against the vague horizon. The stream roared and whispered to our left. Solomon, Buffalo Bill, Indians, my father's face when he gave me my rod at Christmas, my mother's doubtful enthusiasm, Queen Aliquippa, stones rattling from our feet down the stream. Everything was cold and big. Sometimes my father would say something to Solomon. If I had been closer I could have heard, for I was old enough now. I could even have spoken. We walked a long way.

When we stopped it was almost dawn. "I'll liken to go in here," Solomon said. "I'll be awaitin' fer you at the bridge."

We watched him crawl down the bank. He walked out into the stream and I saw the water pull at his trouser legs. It was wonderful. Then my father started on.

"Do you want to use worms, boy?" he said.

"I'd liken to use a Parmachene Belle," I answered.

"Parmachene Belle isn't much good," he said. He wiped his reel with the palm of his haid. "She's better for old-timers like Sol and me. Maybe for you, afterwhile."

"The dull flies are the best," he said. "Anyway, I think a worm would be better."

"I'll use a worm," I said.

As we walked, he took a gob of worms from the bait box at his belt and reached over and stuffed them into my box. Mine was new and green, with holes in the top.

After while he said, "This is a good place for you to start. Fish down, slowly. I'll go down a bit and fish up to you."

"Yes, sir," I said. "Should I use a split-shot, do you think?"

"Yes, a split-shot would be good," he said. He hesitated, and I knew he wanted to say more.

"Son," he said.

"Yes, sir."

"You be careful. The water's fast and deep."

He said it so that I did not feel hurt. "Yes, sir," I said. "I'll be careful."

He looked at me a long time. "Good luck, boy," he said.

"Good luck to you, too," I said.

He kept on looking at me even after that. Then he turned and clumped down the road. For a minute I felt queer and I wanted to cry, but I crawled down the bank instead.

Beside the stream, I did not thread the worm on the hook as I had done before for sunfish. I remembered what he had said. "Not for trout. For trout, you loop it."

All day, after that, the water swirled against my legs. It was hardly a day at all. It was something else. It was cold like a wet branch against your face. It was the pale sunlight of April. It was manhood, muscles, and the sudden rush of a trout upstream. It was the desperate feel of a trout in my hand and the cruel jaw with teeth and rainbow colors in the creel and being alone all day to dark, except at lunch when my father came from nowhere to eat with me. It was real fishing—and for trout—with Solomon and my father and Buffalo Bill. It was water singing, first in the stream, then in my blood, then everywhere, singing and singing. And then coolness, and the sun going down, and shadows, and growing loneliness, except that sometimes I thought I could see my father at the bend behind me.

In the darkness on the bridge, Solomon said to my father, "Any luck?"

"Six," said my father.

"Nine purty ones," said Solomon.

Then my father turned to me. "Any luck, boy?"

"One," I said.

"You caught a trout?" He lifted the lid of my new creel. "It's a beauty," he said, but his voice was unnatural. "Sol," he said, "the boy just caught a trout."

"I'm liken to be proud of you, kid," said Solomon. My father put his hand on my shoulder.

III

I am going to Shade Creek again on the fifteenth of April. I shall go alone, for the two tall men who first took me there are fishing other waters now, and have been for many years. Perhaps I shall be lonely, with no one to show my trout to, and I shall eat my lunch alone on a flat stone in the sunlight, but there will be reunion, too. The stream will say familiar things, its whispers and its roars will be echoed from the rocks, and there will be singing everywhere.

The water will pull at my boots, and the air will smell of hemlock. The tips of the hemlocks will be bright green, and a chickadee will scold.

All day, I shall fish against the current, sending an Iron Blue Dun or a Quill Gordon through the air ahead of me. The dull fly, I have learned, is the best. It will wing its way forward, like a living fly, and will curve to left or to right. It will drop like willow fuzz upon the water, and the leader will fall like a strand of spider web. Once in a while there will be an olive swirl and a splatter of rainbow spray, and a king of the mountain waters will sweep towards the rocks and roots. The rod will vibrate, the line will rise from the water, and he will take to the air again in an arc of liquid sunset. After a time, he will come to net and to creel. There will be sadness, but the sunlight will seem warmer, the air sweeter.

Then, when evening comes and the creel hangs heavy from the shoulder and the bridge is only a few yards away, I shall snip the dull fly from the leader. In its place I shall tie a creature of gold and white and scarlet. I shall whip her dryly through the air and then send her forward, the Parmachene Belle, into the dusk. She is a creature of fancy and of evening. She settles on the water with quivering lightness and glides through the shadows like a luminous moth. Timeless and not of this earth, she drifts through the darkness and rides upon the water like the reflection of a star.

At the bridge I shall make the last cast. The Parmachene Bell is for old-timers. "Like me and yer dad. Someday, mebbe fer you."

She will sail through the night and fall softly as a dream and sweep back towards me. I shall not stop her. She will sail on past me into the water that has been fished, and I shall turn around to watch her go back into currents and time that are no longer near.

Later, when the moon comes up, I shall stand on the bridge, looking downstream. Through the darkness below will come the tinkle of a bell, the smell of Hoppe's Number Nine, two men walking in the dawn, loneliness, the feel of a hand on my shoulder. Standing on the bridge, I shall hear a voice from the moonlit riffles, saying, "Good luck, boy," and again, "Good luck." It will be the same voice that once talked of stars and trout and trees.

Then I shall hear another voice. It will sound like mine, only older. In the bigness of the night it will say, "Good luck to you, too. Here in this now sad place, where our Parmachene Belle floats high, I send you greetings—wherever you are—greetings and good luck, too."

Up Queer Street

by Len Zinberg

After the first round Andy knew it was going to be a hard fight. He was fighting a tough slugger named James "Sandy" Clarke and he was a very dark Negro from the West Indies, much darker than Andy.

In the first round he boxed well and had little difficulty in cracking Clarke with left hooks, but Clarke was short and chesty and powerful—his arms full of thick muscles—and he kept coming in, right hand cocked, taking Andy's left hooks without even grunting. Near the end of the round Clarke let his right go and Andy blocked it with his arm and the arm went numb.

When he came to his corner, Max said: "This Clarke baby can sure take it. That damn chin of his must be made of marble or something. Watch out for him—he can hit."

"Don't I know! Rub my right arm. He near tore it off with a punch."

"You haven't hit him with your right yet," Max said nervously. "You haven't hit him solid yet. Be careful, box him all the way, and when you see an opening, blast his jaw off. Listen here, wait now and keep to boxing 'cause he's tough as hell. You can out-box him easy, but I think I kind of over-matched you this trip, kid, so be careful as hell."

"I'm not losing this one, yet."

"And you ain't going to! You can trim him—if you keep boxing. But be careful! Don't slug—wait till you see an opening a yard wide before you let your right go. And keep cool." Max's voice was low and tense, and he held his cigar butt tightly in the corner of his mouth as he talked.

As he went out for the second round, Max said: "Keep your left going. Hold it in his face all the time, so's he can't get set. And for God's sake don't slug with him!"

Through his mouthpiece Andy tried to say: "I won't—for *my* sake too." He felt pretty calm, this was a game, real sport; Clarke stalked him, right hand ready, and Andy had to jab and hook and run.

Andy came out dancing, and he jabbed and feinted and Clarke fell for most of the feints. Once Clarke took six jabs in a row on the face and the fans began laughing and counting out loud with each stinging jab. But he took them all, his dead pan never changing. And he kept coming in, sure as a tank, coming in with that right ready. Crouched low, his face and body hidden behind his heavy arms, his small eyes fixed on Andy's chin, he came in, waiting for one good shot.

Andy left-hooked him on the jaw and Clarke blinked and tried to roll with the punch, but he didn't do it very well and it was a hard blow and it shook him. Andy feinted with his left, as if for the stomach, and as the dark boy lowered his right to protect his belly, Andy stepped in to the left and standing flat on the canvas shot over his right and it hit just under the side of the jaw. Clarke staggered and covered up and Andy sent over two fast left hooks and another right, all too high on the face. He could hear the sudden roar of the mob fill the arena as he caught Clarke with another hard right just above the jaw and Clarke stumbled over to the ropes, his hands about his head. Andy came charging in for the kill and as he reached him, he saw Clarke suddenly straighten up, a half smile on his dark face, and he knew that he had been a sucker—Clarke's right was coming up from some place.

Andy was out of position and as he frantically raised his own right to shield his jaw, he saw something bright and dazzling before his eyes.

He stared at the bright object for a while, looking at it from all angles, wondering what it was and where it came from and what the hell happened to Clarke and the fight. It was a fierce golden-white brightness but it didnt seem to hurt his eyes much. Then he knew he was on his back and looking up at the ring lights, only the lights seemed very near, almost on top of his eyes. He was on his back, but he couldn't get excited about it. As he squinted at the brightness, something dark flew past his eyes and then it flew past again and he said what the hell? and saw that it was the ref's hand. He looked up at the fat referee, who seemed very near and large and pinkish looking, and the ref was staring down at him and he had big eyes, like a fish. He saw the ref's lip form the word "five" but he didn't hear the sound. He sat up in the bright light and he could almost feel the light on his skin, and waited a long time till the ref's lips formed the word "eight" and then Andy got

up. Getting up was a funny sensation, as if he were a balloon going up—he was just rising from the canvas—as if he were being lifted to his feet. He had nothing to do with it, he just thought I had better get up, and he was up. His head, his body, and his legs, seemed to be three separate parts and he had an idea his legs were walking away and leaving his body in mid-air. The funny thing was that he didn't give a damn. Then the ref was before him, on top of him, and everything was a blur of grey and pink.

The referee pulled Andy to him and rubbed Andy's gloves against his grey shirt, to take any rosin from the canvas. Then he stepped away and Andy flexed his muscles and turned to face Clarke, on his toes and ready to box.

The canvas was a sea of white, stretching for miles and miles and he was standing alone in the middle of all this bright whiteness. A dark object came hurtling across the canvas at him and a smaller dark object left the big dark body and came sailing through the air at his face. He watched it for awhile, then his whole body sailed backward through the air with great ease, and the dark round object which he could now see was a wet glistening glove, stopped a few inches from his face and never reached him. His body bent slowly and easily towards the canvas and came sailing up, so very slowly, and Clarke's glove with his dark arm attached to it, still seemed to be hanging in mid-air. Andy watched his own glove go flying through the air and gracefully land on Clarke's jaw and then Clarke's body was pressed tight against his and they were hugging each other. Just two colored boys in all this whiteness, he thought. What's he hugging and holding me for? This is nice, like running along the beach. I want to be free, what's he holding me for?

As they clinched, the ref stepped in and quickly pushed them apart.

He was no longer hugging Clarke and Andy was happy. Now he could feel his legs running along the long white canvas, slowly and easily as though he were gently tossing on a very soft cushion. The canvas was still long and white and he was running down the length of it, sometimes turning this way and that, going in and out, and often he felt a light tap hitting the whiteness. When these taps came, the whole canvas seemed to shake and he would stop sailing smoothly and seem to start along the canvas in rough jumps and bumps. Clarke was running too, often in front of him and

then in back of him. Clarke would be ahead of him, running backwards, and his face would loom very large and dark-brown and handsome, so large at times that he shut out the long wide road of white before them. Many times he saw that round dark ball which he knew was Clarke's glove, come sailing up to him and fly by his chin and Clarke's arm always followed like a tail on a kite. Andy remembered a big red kite he had when he was a kid. What became of it? This would be some place for kite sailing, no wires or buildings to get in the way, nothing but whiteness. Often he would see his arm in mid-air pushing Clarke's glove away, or the glove would be resting on his arm like two crossed sticks. His own gloves, arms also attached to them, would go sailing lazily through the air and gently by Clarke's face or sometimes they would come to rest on the deep brown face and the face felt very hard. He liked this sailing along the canvas, it was a rich pleasant feeling he had never known before. This must be what they call luxury—he liked the word, for some reason it reminded him of Egypt and he thought of Egypt every time he came across it in a book. Maybe this *was* Egypt and he was running along the desert? Running for miles along clean white soft sand, running evenly and without effort, with a warm wind all 'round him and the bright sun overhead.

There was a loud noise and Andy wondered if it was thunder and if it would rain and spoil everything. But there were no clouds overhead, the sky still was so bright and . . . Suddenly Max's face was in front of him and his mouth was going up and down, open and shut, and Andy realized that he wasn't sailing anymore, but hovering in one spot like a captive balloon. He wanted to start sailing again. Max seemed even whiter than the canvas and his face looked horrible and funny at the same time. He felt something cool and comforting running down his chest, but it all seemed a great distance off, as if his chest were far below his feet.

Max was talking to him and wiping the sweat from his face and sponging his chest with cold water; then the bell rang for the third round.

There was another great, loud noise from the other end of the canvas and he was sailing through the air again and Clarke was back, sailing beside him, in front of him, and there was a shock, as if he had bumped into something, and he stopped sailing and stood still on the white canvas for a long time. Clarke was jumping up and down in front of him and Clarke's gloves went sailing past his

head, faster than before, and then he felt his toes digging into the white sand and saw his own glove sailing through the air as slow and easy as ever, and Clarke's chin was waiting for the glove and they met and then his right glove made a beautiful, slow arc in the air and came down on the other side of Clarke's chin. His left glove was sailing backwards now, his arm leading and the glove following. Something white flew out of Clarke's mouth and Clarke smiled, showing all his white teeth and three bright yellow ones. Andy wanted to smile back but Clarke disappeared and Andy was running along the white by himself. He slowed down a little waiting for Clarke to catch up with him, then he looked around but Clarke wasn't in sight. Far away he could see a white man in grey bending over something dark. But that was very far away. Andy wanted to go over and see what it was, but he saw the ropes stretching in perfect parallel rows for miles and they seemed so straight and long that he stared at them for a long time. The white canvas and the black ropes were lovely and he wished Ruth were with him and that the two of them were naked and sailing along the soft canvas together. She would look very soft, her long legs running beside him, her sleek black hair in the wind, and after they had run for awhile, they would sit down and he would lean against her, feeling how soft she was, and listen to her talk. In all this whiteness they would sit and . . . Clarke appeared again in the distance and came closer and Andy saw his own gloves slowly land on Clarke's jaw, on one side and then on the other his dark gloves would hit Clarke's darker skin. Clarke was very close and their bodies were together and Clarke had his arms around him and was hugging again. He wished Clarke would stop that, what was wrong with him? What would Ruth think if she saw them? Then they were gliding through the air and Clarke's gloves were shooting past his ears and he was happy and everything was all right. Clarke was a good guy and he might introduce him to Ruth, but why do that? Clarke might fight him over her and he didn't feel like fighting and he didn't want anybody else with Ruth . . . he just wanted to run along the white and watch the gloves go by like a train passing trees.

Clarke started dancing away from him and as he got farther and farther away, Andy wondered why he was leaving him, and then Max's face was in front of him and his mouth was still going up and down and he still looked very funny; his face looked like a

couple of things happening at the same time. Andy wanted to find Clarke and show him how funny Max looked. Max had a little blue bottle in his hand, a deep blue that looked pretty, and he held it under Andy's nose and Andy strained his eyes to look down at the bottle and suddenly his nose was on fire and he wanted to scream and the great white canvas started to rush towards him, shrinking till it seemed it would disappear from under him.

Andy saw his glove go up and push the blue bottle away and the fire wasn't so hot and Max made even funnier faces. The canvas began to stretch out again and there was that clap of shrill thunder and Max was gone and he and Clarke were sailing along once more. Clarke's glove was coming up slowly and Andy couldn't see the arm trailing after it and he wondered if the glove would nose-dive like a kite without its tail. All he could see was the glove and it was getting bigger and bigger and it loomed large and black in his face. The glove blotted out the white and everything went black and he was sailing through black air now.

It was night and he was running and twisting through the blackness for a long time. It was so dark he couldn't see a thing ahead of him and he was afraid. I'm lost! he thought. There must be a light someplace. Not even a star. Where is Ruth? Jesus, did I lose her in this blackness? This is a hell of a night, it's so dark. I'm lost and nobody can see me in all this darkness.

There was that sharp burning at his nose again and Max was coming to him out of a fog and Max was staring at him and Max's fat face was wet with sweat. Max opened his mouth and words came out and Andy heard them. "Are you all right? You okay? Come on, Andy, you're doing great. For Chrissakes are you okay? You hear me?"

There was blood on Max's white shirt and Andy said: "Sure I'm all right. Are you hurt? What round is this?"

"The last. Keep on . . ."

"The last!"

"Listen . . ."

"You mean I gone six rounds?"

"Yeah, this is the sixth coming up. Keep jabbing him. He had you out on your feet, but you boxed him fine. Keep that left going. He's tired as hell, but he might try a last-minute finish. The left going all the time and your right up. Watch him, he's dangerous and . . ."

As the bell rang and his mouthpiece was shoved in his mouth, Andy tried to say: "The last round?" but he could only mumble. He felt great and not at all tired. He danced out and Clarke came towards him and the ref stepped between them and they touched gloves and then Clarke came in, still crouched, swinging desperately—his long arms protecting him. Andy was inside the swinging, clubbing right and drove both hands to the body and was surprised to see Clarke's face cut on both cheeks and one eye swollen tight. His lips were bloody and Andy jabbed at the bloody lips and danced away from that swinging right. He blocked another right and the blow didn't have much force behind it and he cracked Clarke with a short hard right as they fell into a clinch. When the ref parted them, Clarke was bleeding badly from the mouth. Andy jabbed him lightly and he remembered a picture he had seen of five husky Negroes fighting a battle royal and they were all battered and bleeding like Clarke and a laughing crowd of whites was watching them. Under the picture they had something about "*Five buck niggers battling . . .*" He jabbed again and again, lightly, keeping Clarke off balance, and he could hear the dull roar of the mob. He thought, What am I cutting up this poor slob for? To make these damn whites yell? The hell with you bastards, you like to see two black boys kicking hell out of each other. You love to see any man cut up and bleeding—as long as it ain't you. I ain't going to paste this guy no more and those crumbs out there know what they can do. They got their money's worth.

He saw an opening for his right and let go, but not hard and Clarke took it and clinched. Andy pushed him away and peppered him with easy jabs and two stiff rights to the shoulder. He easily avoided Clarke's tired clumsy swings, and he knew he could outslug him now. He had a clear shot at Clarke's jaw, but hit him on top of the shoulder and wondered if Max knew he was pulling his punches. Clarke kept coming in, ready for more, still trying to connect with his right and Andy thought: What's he coming in for? He must know he's licked, that I can knock him kicking if I want. He ought to take it easy, coast along, he'll get paid the same. And he comes in, swinging that damn right of his like a blackjack.

For the rest of the round, Andy kept on boxing and hitting Clarke with light lefts and rights, and once he hit him flush on the mouth and Clarke's mouthpiece flew out covered with blood and spit. After that Andy kept his punches to the stomach, pulling

them slightly, and making it look as though he were giving Clarke a bad body beating. The bell rang and Andy reached over and patted Clarke on the back and Clarke glared at him with his one good eye, which was kind of glassy, and Andy went to his corner. It suddenly came to him that maybe he hadn't won, maybe Clarke had beaten him in those rounds he had been out on his feet. As he spit his mouthpiece into Max's cupped hands, he asked: "How'd I do?"

"Great! Andy, you was swell. Even in the last round you boxed him like an old timer and didn't take no chances. You was smart like a champ! He had you off your nut and up queer street for four rounds, but you was on your toes and boxing like a champ all the time. My God, for a minute I thought you was out cold. What a clout he caught you with in the second round! You fell for that old sucker trick, but you took it. You showed tonight you can take it. Yes sir, you took it like a . . ."

The announcer held up his hands and then pointed to Andy's corner and yelled: "The winnahh . . . Whitman!" He could hear the people clapping and cheering and he wondered if they would be cheering if he had beaten a white boy. Andy stood up and clasped his hands over his head, like he had seen fighters in the movies do, and then he ran over to Clarke's corner and shook his hand. Clarke said in his best West Indian accent: "You're a good block mon, and I'd like to fight you a-gain. You were a very lucky mon this evening."

Andy said: "Sure. Maybe we'll tangle again. Good luck," and he thought, Lucky? You dumb monkey man, the next time I'll flatten your ears back! He ran back to his corner and Max put his robe on and as they left the ring there was a lot of applause.

Homecoming at State

by Herb Graffis

Maybe you won't remember it now, but when State opened its big stadium back in the terrific twenties, that historic event was heralded by the hurling of practically every fancy adjective in the bright lexicon of sports reporting.

The palace of pigskin got publicity that stirred State's alumni to giving down funds like a slot-machine jackpot. And no wonder. State's new press coop was a corner of heaven itself compared with some of the storm-swept sties at other schools where snow whipped into the typewriters late in the season.

State's new padded cell for the ink-stained wretches had windows and steam heat like a bridal suite. We lived through our labors in the other schools' sties by heating with community jars of gin. Naturally all the boys plugged for State. It saved us the expense of gin—during the games.

Of course State wouldn't have had its vast and pretty plant if it hadn't had a football team.

The first year State's stadium received its hundreds of thousands was the last year of the great Pinky Fowler. Pinky really made football at State. He was a back who could do everything and had everything, except, perhaps, a brain that was good for anything else than football. Ten other kids always were playing on the club at the same time Pinky was performing, but I'll give you long odds you can't remember the name of any one of those other lads on the squad.

Pinky had figured himself lucky to get a job on a coal truck right after he got out of high school, so old William the Wizard Everall got him for State at a Woolworth price. I always said the late and sainted William was the best judge of football possibilities who ever lived.

For books, catch-as-catch-can tuition, and $75 a month during the school year William got Pinky. The first year, when Pinky plainly was ineligible, he was a deficit, but only then. Even as a back on the freshman squad Pinky was such a standout that Ever-

all began planning his teams and his play around the carrot-topped wonder child.

"If the Lord will only give me the right kind of a blocking back to run with Fowler, you fellows can reserve berths to the Rose Bowl," the Wizard used to tell us when we sat around trying to get some copy straight from the coach's feedbag. Alumni and scouts from the coaching staff and Everall himself followed leads all over the country trying to locate the missing link. They shanghaied or seduced talent by droves and shipped it into the state corral. Some of the kids were better than good, but none of them was anywhere near Pinky's class.

Until Old William himself happened to see a kid playing for the high school just two blocks from his own home!

The boy's name was . . . well, I will have to paw through the old record books, so wait a second; I can't think of his name offhand, so help me!

Now I have it! Smith. John Smith. Funny I couldn't think of it.

Smith was a push-over for William the Wiz. Just think; the kid lived at home, and that meant he didn't have to get the room and board money needed by most other kids William brought into his fold. It was a plain, neat little house the Smiths had. The boy's father worked in a garage. Come to think of it now, the old man got pneumonia washing cars and died a couple of years ago; so a fellow on the local paper at State's town told me.

Johnny was crazy to be an engineer. With the few dollars his old man was making Johnny didn't have any more chance to go to engineering school on a cash basis than I have to write *Romeo and Juliet*. So when foxy William made the deal with Johnny the boy went overboard for tuition only. They gave him book money later, only when they found that earning book money by holding a job during spring practice and at nights during the season was interfering with his football.

Although Pinky Fowler showed circus stuff when he was a sophomore and a junior, it was when he was a senior and had Smith in there blocking that Pinky became the sensation who still sparkles in the record books and memories.

Even though I had forgotten Johnny's name, I still can remember that 60-yard run of Pinky's that beat the Prowlers 13 to 7 in the last minute or so. That was the next to the last game of the regular season. It started out, as I recall, like it was going

to be a pass. Pinky saw a chance to leg it, and he did! Three or four guys—I forget exactly how many—were hit by Johnny and taken out of the play just as though they'd tied with a fast freight train. Johnny took so many of the opposition out of the play Pinky could have scored walking on his hands. Now it comes back to me that Johnny did get swell mention in the papers for that.

I even did a feature story on Johnny after that game. I bumped into him at a hamburger joint on my way to the train late that night. The kid said he had a chance to pick up a buck washing cars on the night side at the garage where his old man worked. There always was pretty heavy automobile traffic into State for those games when Pinky was in his prime. Plenty of the folks got hitting the gin and scotch from the Capone hielands and were in no condition to drive home.

Johnny was reading an engineering magazine while he was gnawing his hamburger. That's how I happened to recognize him. State's athletic department had sent out some dope on him being the scholastic star of the staff.

He got to telling me that he had been thinking about giving up school and getting himself a job. He'd come home from football practice late and all tired out. When a kid like Johnny gets tired that's really some tired. The queer part of it about Johnny was that in every game he was a 60-minute man who always was as peppery on the last play as he was on the kick-off. The kid looked like he never wore down.

He told me that night at the groundhog counter that instead of stoking himself with some hot grub when he got home he'd flop and sleep. He'd get up later, sneak to the ice box so he wouldn't waken his mother, then study late. That all got to worrying his old lady and his old man, I guess, because he told about them thinking school was too much for him.

I said to him he'd better see William the Wiz and talk it over before he dropped out of school. Another funny thing I think of now! Everall telephoned me the next Monday to thank me for giving the boy advice to see him. William told me to go around and buy myself the best overcoat I could find and have the bill sent to him. The coat was custom-made; one hundred and fifty smackeroos.

Well, Everall and an alumnus who was head of a big machinery

company got together and Johnny was promised a summer job and a job after he finished school, if he'd stick it out.

The Smith boy said he'd go it. The salary they promised him must have looked great to that kid, even if he had to take a beating before he started to collect.

And a beating he did take!

State came into the last game of that season with the Rose Bowl hanging on the outcome. State hadn't been beaten. With Pinky the cinch All-American setting off fireworks at every chalkline State had drawn more customers at home and abroad than any other team in the country. Newspaper syndicate guys already were haggling with William about a contract for next year. I got it inside that one syndicate offered Everall 25 grand as a guarantee, plus 35 per cent of the gross on his newspaper stuff and other deals, plus Frank Meyers as his ghost, and Frank could ghost a phony story to read like the Bible.

Don't think that State's business office didn't want that Rose Bowl gravy, too. You don't build a stadium with box tops or facsimiles thereof.

Brother, was that a finale to end finales!

The kids on both clubs acted as though they all had been given hypos and had batteries in their saddles. From the kick-off to the gun the boys went at each other like they'd been issued meat-axes along with their sweaters. Two guys died of heart failure in the stands, and I guess the only reason the police blue wagons didn't come around and haul off the kids for assault and battery was because ambulances were blocking the roads to State's ball park.

Old William thought his club was fast, smart and tough. Pete Book with his Cougars also had an outfit. Pete had kids who could run the hundred in 10 flat wearing diver's shoes. They were so smart they had the officials in a fog all through the game. And tough? They were rawhide, eleven deep.

Don't take my word for it. Go back into the files and you'll see that the only thing that saved State from being flattened by a high-speed steam roller was two fumbles by the Cougars inside State's 10-yard line before the game was 10 minutes old. Those fumbles weren't sloppy ball handling, either. Swede Loberg was one of State's backfield coaches then. He told me on the way out to the Rose Bowl that it was Johnny Smith who'd muscle that ball out of their clutch.

Pinky was slow in rising to shine. He'd start on a run with Johnny dumping the enemy in the line of march, but a Cougar kid would nail Pinky from Pink's southern exposure. Those Cougars were so fast they could give lightning 10 yards head start and beat it to the goal line.

You know how kids are when they get properly steamed up by coaches who are famous psychologists of the sports sections. Those masters of the kid mind don't pull that Die for Dear Old Subnormal line. They drop cold and sly references to the other school talking about their team's mothers in the other school's zoology lectures, and such stuff. Old William was a genius at that. If he had a superior in this technique his master was Pete Book.

That game was a stand-off the first half. Johnny Smith was the only one who played the full thirty minutes. We could hear the smack of colliding kids and the grunts clear up in the press coop. That was one of the few games where I've ever heard a kid moan when he was carried off the field.

Up to about the middle of the last quarter, it was about the same story play after play, with State on the defensive. Somebody else "and Smith" brought down the Cougar ball carriers. On the offense Johnny kept hammering trying to knock open a hole for Pinky.

The Swede gave me the close-up later. He said that William whispered to him he ought to take the Smith kid out for a rest, but Johnny was doing more than State's line to batter the Cougars' right side to a pulp. "Besides, what three kids can I put in his place?" the Wizard remarked. The Swede said he never would forget that because it showed old William never got so excited he failed to see the humorous side of a situation. Old William was a great guy as a banquet speaker, too. Lots of laughs in him.

The break finally came. Pinky went outside his right tackle for about 25 yards. His end and his tackle were outcharged by Cougar kids, but Johnny was there blocking like an explosion in a dynamite factory. When the ball was downed, so was Johnny. Johnny stayed down.

As I got the story, Monkey-face Maginnis, State's trainer said to Coach William, "that Smith kid's hurt and hurt bad. He ought to lie there as long as we can let him, and be taken out easy on the stretcher."

"Lie there, hell," said Everall. "With the other kids so punch-

drunk they can hardly stand. Yank Smith out quick before the other kids get their breath. We'll send Fowler at that right side again before they know what's hitting them." Old William, they say, was the best coach who ever lived when it came to recognizing a break and making the most of it.

So Monkey-face and another trainer went out and yanked Johnny to his feet and dragged him to the sidelines. They laid him on a blanket in front of the bench. "Lug him out, you dopes," the Wizard muttered. "Seeing him here might work the wrong way on our kids and for the others."

Smith was bundled away, on the double, and none too gentle, although the trainers tried to go easy.

The Cougars' captain missed his signal from the bench, didn't think to call time out, or guessed wrong on how strong his team was. Old William's hunch about the Cougars' wilting defense was right.

On the next play Pinky again went outside right tackle, and for 30 yards and a touchdown.

The final was 6 to 0; State winning.

State went to the Rose Bowl. Johnny didn't. He went stale, or something, or lost interest. Couldn't remember signals and got in everybody's way. The story went around that he'd had a kind of breakdown from studying too much. Myself, I think that yarn was an alibi promoted by the athletic publicity department at State to explain its club's sorry showing in the Bowl. State looked like it picked up its squad from its sorority houses. Its kids sure didn't show much as football players in that rout. Pinky Fowler was a floperoo. The writers said it was the heat or change of water, or something.

Johnny Smith dropped out of school. No explanations came from anybody, and you know how it is with most football players unless they're flashy ball carriers or passers. A year or so after they're out of action and the papers only the super-wacky of the gridiron-goofey public remember the players.

I was down to State last week covering the Homecoming game.

It was gay and beautiful on the campus. The night before the game I wandered around looking at the screwy decorations on the fraternity and sorority houses and hearing the kids' merry noises blast out of the open doors. Walking around in the moonlight got me to wondering why any old grad ever came back to be re-

minded of what a swell time he had when he was a kid. Those days are over for him. Why's he want to think himself into an emotional hangover?

I wandered under the big trees that sieved moonlight onto the sidewalks and began getting sentimental thinking about what those kids were going to get out of the big show coming up when they got out of school. All I'd scored since I got out of school was four callouses; two on fingers from pecking at a typewriter and two behind from sitting in front of a grinder.

Just doping along, I wound up back in the same hamburger stand where I'd talked to Johnny Smith. I sat there loading up a couple and hoping the boys hadn't started the poker game in the room where Silly Slattery of the *Sun* and I were cell-mates. I wanted to catch myself some sleep but I knew I wouldn't because I'd got to thinking about that serious kid who was the best blocking back I ever saw. I couldn't think of the kid's name. Always bothers me when I can't remember a guy's name.

What if I'd see that kid at Homecoming? He'd be a man now. Maybe starting to get saggy and a lot of navel development like I have. Probably worrying about his work and wondering why he hadn't majored in milk-wagon driving instead of engineering. Folks always want milk but who wants nice fresh engineering delivered to the back door every morning?

The kid made a mistake. He should have stayed in school and graduated. Another couple of years like he'd played as a sophomore, and he might have been ballyhooed so he'd be remembered.

But should I be second-guessing other people's lives?

Those Homecoming games at State always get me. One of their stunts between halves is to have a squad of the State's R.O.T.C. students gather around a big bronze tablet where there are the names of State's kids who were knocked off in the First World War. A salute is fired. The buglers blow Taps.

As the first note of Taps hits the air everybody uncovers and stands.

The telegraph operators in the press box silence their keys and sounders. The stillness is so complete and solemn a guy is scared that the noise of his heart beating will be blasphemy.

Outside the rim of State's stadium you can see, from the height of the press coop, fields of corn stacked like an Indian camp. Cars

of football specials are stretched out on a railroad siding. Hundreds of automobiles are parked together.

Taps is mournful enough anyway, but out in the country with 55,000 people listening in dead silence and thinking about youngsters who left the beauty of this prairie forever, each note of Taps cuts into your heart.

Some woman, about half-way down in the rows between the press coop and the field, choked a sob. It sounded like a shell had been fired to shatter the stillness.

And then the darndest thing you ever heard; just as Taps was a few bars from the finish.

A hot-dog hustler, a wizened, bent little guy—slug-nutty if I ever saw a man that way—yelled out "Getcherself a hot and delicious frankfurter, folks. Who wants the next one?"

It sounded louder than any scoring cheer that ever shook State's stadium.

I thought the crowd was going to tear the guy apart. As Taps died away they bawled him out and sneered at him, and acted like he'd just broken out with smallpox.

The little guy looked scared. He didn't know he'd done anything out of line. All he knew was to peddle hot dogs. A fat man in an animal coat barked to the fellow sitting alongside him, a few rows below the press stand, "I'm going to have anybody who's that stupid canned, if it's the last thing I do."

The telegraph instruments started clicking like a boiler factory again. My operator handed me a message from the office asking to rush a new lead. But I couldn't stop looking at the hot-dog hustler slouching down the aisle, whipped and hunted looking.

I knew I'd seen that guy before. Maybe one of those bums that hang around fight gyms panhandling for coffee and sinkers.

He had that frail and foolish look of a punk who'd been punched around. I couldn't imagine this one being on the loose, though, because any case as sock-silly as this guy gets a benefit in the fight racket, and the boys send him away for treatment.

The shriveled little guy turned around when he got down to the slot to the concrete runway that led beneath the stands. He unstrapped his hot-dog basket.

He looked up at the Homecoming crowd. On his face was a puzzled and painful imitation of a defiant grin. He looked almost like he was challenging the crowd to step down and fight him.

Then it hit me.

Sure I'd seen the pathetic slap-doped specimen before. And from where I sat!

It was Johnny Smith, at Homecoming.

The Eighty-Yard Run

by Irwin Shaw

The pass was high and wide and he jumped for it, feeling it slap flatly against his hands, as he shook his hips to throw off the halfback who was diving at him. The center floated by, his hands desperately brushing Darling's knee as Darling picked his feet up high and delicately ran over a blocker and an opposing linesman in a jumble on the ground near the scrimmage line. He had ten yards in the clear and picked up speed, breathing easily, feeling his thigh pads rising and falling against his legs, listening to the sound of cleats behind him, pulling away from them, watching the other backs heading him off toward the sideline, the whole picture, the men closing in on him, the blockers fighting for position, the ground he had to cross, all suddenly clear in his head, for the first time in his life not a meaningless confusion of men, sounds, speed. He smiled a little to himself as he ran, holding the ball lightly in front of him with his two hands, his knees pumping high, his hips twisting in the almost-girlish run of a back in a broken field. The first halfback came at him and he fed him his leg, then swung at the last moment, took the shock of the man's shoulder without breaking stride, ran right through him, his cleats biting securely into the turf. There was only the safety man now, coming warily at him, his arms crooked, hands spread. Darling tucked the ball in, spurted at him, driving hard, hurling himself along, his legs pounding, knees high, all two hundred pounds bunched into controlled attack. He was sure he was going to get past the safety man. Without thought, his arms and legs working beautifully together, he headed right for the safety man, stiff-armed him, feeling blood spurt instantaneously from the man's nose onto his hand, seeing his face go awry, head turned, mouth pulled to one side. He pivoted away, keeping the arm locked, dropping the safety man as he ran easily toward the goal line, with the drumming of cleats diminishing behind him.

How long ago? It was autumn then and the ground was getting hard because the nights were cold and leaves from the maples around the stadium blew across the practice fields in gusts of wind

and the girls were beginning to put polo coats over their sweaters when they came to watch practice in the afternoons . . . Fifteen years. Darling walked slowly over the same ground in the spring twilight, in his neat shoes, a man of thirty-five dressed in a double-breasted suit, ten pounds heavier in the fifteen years, but not fat, with the years between 1925 and 1940 showing in his face.

The coach was smiling quietly to himself and the assistant coaches were looking at each other with pleasure the way they always did when one of the second stringers suddenly did something fine, bringing credit to them, making their $2,000 a year a tiny bit more secure.

Darling trotted back, smiling, breathing deeply but easily, feeling wonderful, not tired, though this was the tail end of practice and he'd run eighty yards. The sweat poured off his face and soaked his jersey and he liked the feeling, the warm moistness lubricating his skin like oil. Off in a corner of the field some players were punting and the smack of leather against the ball came pleasantly through the afternoon air. The freshmen were running signals on the next field and the quarterback's sharp voice, the pound of the eleven pairs of cleats, the "Dig, now, *dig!*" of the coaches, the laughter of the players all somehow made him feel happy as he trotted back to midfield, listening to the applause and shouts of the students along the sidelines, knowing that after that run the coach would have to start him Saturday against Illinois.

Fifteen years, Darling thought, remembering the shower after the workout, the hot water steaming off his skin and the deep soapsuds and all the young voices singing with the water streaming down and towels going and managers running in and out and the sharp sweet smell of oil of wintergreen and everybody clapping him on the back as he dressed and Packard, the captain, who took being captain very seriously, coming over to him and shaking his hand and saying, "Darling, you're going to go places in the next two years."

The assistant manager fussed over him, wiping a cut on his leg with alcohol and iodine, the little sting making him realize suddenly how fresh and whole and solid his body felt. The manager slapped a piece of adhesive tape over the cut and Darling noticed the sharp clean white of the tape against the ruddiness of the skin, fresh from the shower.

He dressed slowly, the softness of his shirt and the soft warmth of his wool socks and his flannel trousers a reward against his skin after the harsh pressure of the shoulder harness and thigh and hip pads. He drank three glasses of cold water, the liquid reaching down coldly inside of him, soothing the harsh dry places in his throat and belly left by the sweat and running and shouting of practice.

Fifteen years.

The sun had gone down and the sky was green behind the stadium and he laughed quietly to himself as he looked at the stadium, rearing above the trees, and knew that on Saturday when the 70,000 voices roared as the team came running out onto the field, part of that enormous salute would be for him. He walked slowly, listening to the gravel crunch satisfactorily under his shoes in the still twilight, feeling his clothes swing lightly against his skin, breathing the thin evening air, feeling the wind move softly in his damp hair, wonderfully cool behind his ears and at the nape of his neck.

Louise was waiting for him at the road, in her car. The top was down and he noticed all over again, as he always did when he saw her, how pretty she was, the rough blonde hair and the large, inquiring eyes and the bright mouth, smiling now.

She threw the door open. "Were you good today?" she asked.

"Pretty good," he said. He climbed in, sank luxuriously into the soft leather, stretched his legs far out. He smiled, thinking of the eighty yards. "Pretty damn good."

She looked at him seriously for a moment, then scrambled around, like a little girl, kneeling on the seat next to him, grabbed him, her hands along his ears, and kissed him as he sprawled, head back, on the seat cushion. She let go of him, but kept her head close to his, over his. Darling reached up slowly and rubbed the back of his hand against her cheek, lit softly by a street-lamp a hundred feet away. They looked at each other, smiling.

Louise drove down to the lake and they sat there silently, watching the moon rise behind the hills on the other side. Finally he reached over, pulled her gently to him, kissed her. Her lips grew soft, her body sank into his, tears formed slowly in her eyes. He knew, for the first time, that he could do whatever he wanted with her.

"Tonight," he said. "I'll call for you at seven-thirty. Can you get out?"

She looked at him. She was smiling, but the tears were still full in her eyes. "All right," she said. "I'll get out. How about you? Won't the coach raise hell?"

Darling grinned. "I got the coach in the palm of my hand," he said. "Can you wait till seven-thirty?"

She grinned back at him. "No," she said.

They kissed and she started the car and they went back to town for dinner. He sang on the way home.

* * *

Christian Darling, thirty-five years old, sat on the frail spring grass, greener now than it ever would be again on the practice field, looked thoughtfully up at the stadium, a deserted ruin in the twilight. He had started on the first team that Saturday and every Saturday after that for the next two years, but it had never been as satisfactory as it should have been. He never had broken away, the longest run he'd ever made was thirty-five yards, and that in a game that was already won, and then that kid had come up from the third team, Diederich, a blank-faced German kid from Wisconsin, who ran like a bull, ripping lines to pieces Saturday after Saturday, plowing through, never getting hurt, never changing his expression, scoring more points, gaining more ground than all the rest of the team put together, making everybody's All-American, carrying the ball three times out of four, keeping everybody else out of the headlines. Darling was a good blocker and he spent his Saturday afternoons working on the big Swedes and Polacks who played tackle and end for Michigan, Illinois, Purdue, hurling into huge pile-ups, bobbing his head wildly to elude the great raw hands swinging like meat-cleavers at him as he went charging in to open up holes for Diederich coming through like a locomotive behind him. Still, it wasn't so bad. Everybody liked him and he did his job and he was pointed out on the campus and boys always felt important when they introduced their girls to him at their proms, and Louise loved him and watched him faithfully in the games, even in the mud, when your own mother wouldn't know you, and drove him around in her car keeping the top down because she was proud of him and wanted to show everybody that she was Christian Darling's girl. She bought him crazy presents because her father was

rich, watches, pipes, humidors, an icebox for beer for his room, curtains, wallets, a fifty-dollar dictionary.

"You'll spend every cent your old man owns," Darling protested once when she showed up at his rooms with seven different packages in her arms and tossed them onto the couch.

"Kiss me," Louise said, "and shut up."

"Do you want to break your poor old man?"

"I don't mind. I want to buy you presents."

"Why?"

"It makes me feel good. Kiss me. I don't know why. Did you know that you're an important figure?"

"Yes," Darling said gravely.

"When I was waiting for you at the library yesterday two girls saw you coming and one of them said to the other, 'That's Christian Darling. He's an important figure.' "

"You're a liar."

"I'm in love with an important figure."

"Still, why the hell did you have to give me a forty-pound dictionary?"

"I wanted to make sure," Louise said, "that you had a token of my esteem. I want to smother you in tokens of my esteem."

Fifteen years ago.

They'd married when they got out of college. There'd been other women for him, but all casual and secret, more for curiosity's sake, and vanity, women who'd thrown themselves at him and flattered him, a pretty mother at a summer camp for boys, an old girl from his home town who'd suddenly blossomed into a coquette, a friend of Louise's who had dogged him grimly for six months and had taken advantage of the two weeks when Louise went home when her mother died. Perhaps Louise had known, but she'd kept quiet, loving him completely, filling his rooms with presents, religiously watching him battling with the big Swedes and Polacks on the line of scrimmage on Saturday afternoons, making plans for marrying him and living with him in New York and going with him there to the nightclubs, the theatres, the good restaurants, being proud of him in advance, tall, white-teethed, smiling, large, yet moving lightly, with an athlete's grace, dressed in evening clothes, approvingly eyed by magnificently dressed and famous women in theatre lobbies, with Louise adoringly at his side.

Her father, who manufactured inks, set up a New York office for

Darling to manage and presented him with three hundred accounts and they lived on Beekman Place with a view of the river with fifteen thousand dollars a year between them, because everybody was buying everything in those days, including ink. They saw all the shows and went to all the speakeasies and spent their fifteen thousand dollars a year and in the afternoons Louise went to the art galleries and the matinees of the more serious plays that Darling didn't like to sit through and Darling slept with a girl who danced in the chorus of *Rosalie* and with the wife of a man who owned three copper mines. Darling played squash three times a week and remained as solid as a stone barn and Louise never took her eyes off him when they were in the same room together, watching him with a secret, miser's smile, with a trick of coming over to him in the middle of a crowded room and saying gravely, in a low voice, "You're the handsomest man I've ever seen in my whole life. Want a drink?"

Nineteen twenty-nine came to Darling and to his wife and father-in-law, the maker of inks, just as it came to everyone else. The father-in-law waited until 1933 and then blew his brains out and when Darling went to Chicago to see what the books of the firm looked like he found out all that was left were debts and three or four gallons of unbought ink.

"Please, Christian," Louise said, sitting in their neat Beekman Place apartment, with a view of the river and prints of paintings by Dufy and Braque and Picasso on the wall, "please, why do you want to start drinking at two o'clock in the afternoon?"

"I have nothing else to do," Darling said, putting down his glass, emptied of its fourth drink. "Please pass the whiskey."

Louise filled his glass. "Come take a walk with me," she said. "We'll walk along the river."

"I don't want to walk along the river," Darling said, squinting intensely at the prints of paintings by Dufy, Braque and Picasso.

"We'll walk along Fifth Avenue."

"I don't want to walk along Fifth Avenue."

"Maybe," Louise said gently, "you'd like to come with me to some art galleries. There's an exhibition by a man named Klee—"

"I don't want to go to any art galleries. I want to sit here and drink Scotch whiskey," Darling said. "Who the hell hung those goddam pictures up on the wall?"

"I did," Louise said.

"I hate them."

"I'll take them down," Louise said.

"Leave them there. It gives me something to do in the afternoon. I can hate them." Darling took a long swallow. "Is that the way people paint these days?"

"Yes, Christian. Please don't drink any more."

"Do you like painting like that?"

"Yes, dear."

"Really?"

"Really."

Darling looked carefully at the prints once more. "Little Louise Tucker. The middle-western beauty. I like pictures with horses in them. Why should you like pictures like that?"

"I just happen to have gone to a lot of galleries in the last few years . . ."

"Is that what you do in the afternoon?"

"That's what I do in the afternoon," Louise said.

"I drink in the afternoon."

Louise kissed him lightly on the top of his head as he sat there squinting at the pictures on the wall, the glass of whiskey held firmly in his hand. She put on her coat and went out without saying another word. When she came back in the early evening, she had a job on a woman's fashion magazine.

They moved downtown and Louise went out to work every morning and Darling sat home and drank and Louise paid the bills as they came up. She made believe she was going to quit work as soon as Darling found a job, even though she was taking over more responsibility day by day at the magazine, interviewing authors, picking painters for the illustrations and covers, getting actresses to pose for pictures, going out for drinks with the right people, making a thousand new friends whom she loyally introduced to Darling.

"I don't like your hat," Darling said, once, when she came in in the evening and kissed him, her breath rich with Martinis.

"What's the matter with my hat, Baby?" she asked, running her fingers through his hair. "Everybody says it's very smart."

"It's too damned smart," he said. "It's not for you. It's for a rich, sophisticated woman of thirty-five with admirers."

Louise laughed. "I'm practicing to be a rich, sophisticated woman of thirty-five with admirers," she said. He stared soberly

at her. "Now, don't look so grim, Baby. It's still the same simple little wife under the hat." She took the hat off, threw it into a corner, sat on his lap. "See? Homebody Number One."

"Your breath could run a train," Darling said, not wanting to be mean, but talking out of boredom, and sudden shock at seeing his wife curiously a stranger in a new hat, with a new expression in her eyes under the little brim, secret, confident, knowing.

Louise tucked her head under his chin so he couldn't smell her breath. "I had to take an author out for cocktails," she said. "He's a boy from the Ozark mountains and he drinks like a fish. He's a Communist."

"What the hell is a Communist from the Ozarks doing writing for a woman's fashion magazine?"

Louise chuckled. "The magazine business is getting all mixed up these days. The publishers want to have a foot in every camp. And anyway, you can't find an author under seventy these days who isn't a Communist."

"I don't think I like you to associate with all those people, Louise," Darling said. "Drinking with them."

"He's a very nice, gentle boy," Louise said. "He reads Ernest Dobson."

"Who's Ernest Dobson?"

Louise patted his arm, stood up, fixed her hair. "He's an English poet."

Darling felt that somehow he had disappointed her. "Am I supposed to know who Ernest Dobson is?"

"No, dear. I'd better go in and take a bath."

After she had gone, Darling went over to the corner where the hat was lying and picked it up. It was nothing, a scrap of straw, a red flower, a veil, meaningless on his big hand, but on his wife's head a signal of something . . . big city, smart and knowing women drinking and dining with men other than their husbands, conversation about things a normal man wouldn't know much about, Frenchmen who painted as though they used their elbows instead of brushes, composers who wrote whole symphonies without a single melody in them, writers who knew all about politics and women who knew all about writers, the movement of the proletariat, Marx, somehow mixed up with five-dollar dinners and the best looking women in America and fairies who made them laugh and half-sentences immediately understood and secretly hilarious and wives who

called their husbands, "Baby." He put the hat down, a scrap of straw and a red flower, and a little veil. He drank some whiskey straight and went into the bathroom where his wife was lying deep in her bath, singing to herself and smiling from time to time like a little girl, paddling the water gently with her hands, sending up a slight spicy fragrance from the bath-salts she used.

He stood over her, looking down at her. She smiled up at him, her eyes half closed, her body pink and shimmering in the warm, scented water. All over again, with all the old suddenness, he was hit deep inside him with the knowledge of how beautiful she was, how much he needed her.

"I came in here," he said, "to tell you I wish you wouldn't call me 'Baby.' "

She looked up at him from the bath, her eyes quickly full of sorrow, half-understanding what he meant. He knelt and put his arms around her, his sleeves plunged heedlessly in the water, his shirt and jacket soaking wet as he clutched her wordlessly, holding her crazily tight, crushing her breath from her, kissing her desperately, searchingly, regretfully.

* * *

He got jobs after that, selling real estate and automobiles, but somehow, although he had a desk with his name on a wooden wedge on it, and he went to the office religiously at nine each morning, he never managed to sell anything and he never made any money.

Louise was made assistant editor and the house was always full of strange men and women who talked fast and got angry on abstract subjects like mural paintings, novelists, labor unions. Negro short-story writers drank Louise's liquor, and a lot of Jews, and big solemn men with scarred faces and knotted hands who talked slowly but clearly about picket lines and battles with guns and leadpipe at mine-shaft-heads and in front of factory gates. And Louise moved among them all, confidently, knowing what they were talking about, with opinions that they listened to and argued about just as though she were a man. She knew everybody, condescended to no one, devoured books that Darling had never heard of, walked along the streets of the city, excited, at home, soaking in all the million tides of New York without fear, with constant wonder.

Her friends liked Darling and sometimes he found a man who wanted to get off in the corner and talk about the new boy who played fullback for Princeton, and the decline of the double wing-

back, or even the state of the stock market, but for the most part he sat on the edge of things, solid and quiet in the high storm of words. "The dialectics of the situation . . . and the theatre has been given over to expert jugglers . . . Picasso? What man has a right to paint old bones and collect ten thousand dollars for them? . . . I stand firmly behind Trotsky . . . Poe was the last American critic. When he died they put lilies on the grave of American criticism. I don't say this because they panned my last book, but . . ."

Once in a while he caught Louise looking soberly and consideringly at him through the cigarette smoke and the noise and he avoided her eyes and found an excuse to get up and go into the kitchen for more ice or to open another bottle.

* * *

"Come on," Cathal Flaherty was saying, standing at the door with a girl, "you've got to come down and see this. It's down on Fourteenth Street, in the old Civic Repertory, and you can only see it on Sunday nights and I guarantee you'll come out of the theatre singing." Flaherty was a big young Irishman with a broken nose who was the lawyer for a longshoreman's union, and he had been hanging around the house for six months on and off, roaring and shutting everybody else up when he got in an argument. "It's a new play, *Waiting for Lefty*, it's about taxi-drivers."

"Odets," the girl with Flaherty said. "It's by a guy named Odets."

"I never heard of him," Darling said.

"He's a new one," the girl said.

"It's like watching a bombardment," Flaherty said. "I saw it last Sunday night. You've got to see it."

"Come on, Baby," Louise said to Darling, excitement in her eyes already. "We've been sitting in the Sunday *Times* all day, this'll be a great change."

"I see enough taxi-drivers every day," Darling said, not because he meant that, but because he didn't like to be around Flaherty, who said things that made Louise laugh a lot and whose judgment she accepted on almost every subject. "Let's go to the movies."

"You've never seen anything like this before," Flaherty said. "He wrote this play with a baseball bat."

"Come on," Louise coaxed, "I bet it's wonderful."

"He has long hair," the girl with Flaherty said. "Odets. I met

him at a party. He's an actor. He didn't say a goddam thing all night."

"I don't feel like going down to Fourteenth Street," Darling said, wishing Flaherty and his girl would get out. "It's gloomy."

"Oh, hell!" Louise said loudly. She looked coolly at Darling, as though she'd just been introduced to him and was making up her mind about him, and not very favorably. He saw her looking at him, knowing there was something new and dangerous in her face and he wanted to say something, but Flaherty was there and his damned girl, and anyway, he didn't know what to say.

"I'm going," Louise said, getting her coat. "I don't think Fourteenth Street is gloomy."

"I'm telling you," Flaherty was saying, helping her on with her coat, "it's the Battle of Gettysburg, in Brooklynese."

"Nobody could get a word out of him," Flaherty's girl was saying as they went through the door. "He just sat there all night."

The door closed. Louise hadn't said good-night to him. Darling walked around the room four times, then sprawled out on the sofa, on top of the Sunday *Times*. He lay there for five minutes looking at the ceiling, thinking of Flaherty walking down the street talking in that booming voice, between the girls, holding their arms.

Louise had looked wonderful. She'd washed her hair in the afternoon and it had been very soft and light and clung close to her head as she stood there angrily putting her coat on. Louise was getting prettier every year, partly because she knew by now how pretty she was, and made the most of it.

"Nuts," Darling said, standing up. "Oh, nuts."

He put on his coat and went down to the nearest bar and had five drinks off by himself in a corner before his money ran out.

* * *

The years since then had been foggy and downhill. Louise had been nice to him, and in a way, loving and kind, and they'd fought only once, when he said he was going to vote for Landon. ("Oh, Christ," she'd said, "doesn't *anything* happen inside your head?" Don't you read the papers? The penniless Republican!") She'd been sorry later and apologized for hurting him, but apologized as she might to a child. He'd tried hard, had gone grimly to the art galleries, the concert halls, the bookshops, trying to gain on the trail of his wife, but it was no use. He was bored, and none of what he saw or heard or dutifully read made much sense to him and

finally he gave it up. He had thought, many nights as he ate dinner alone, knowing that Louise would come home late and drop silently into bed without explanation, of getting a divorce, but he knew the loneliness, the hopelessness, of not seeing her again would be too much to take. So he was good, completely devoted, ready at all times to go anyplace with her, do anything she wanted. He even got a small job, in a broker's office and paid his own way, bought his own liquor.

Then he'd been offered the job of going from college to college as a tailor's representative. "We want a man," Mr. Rosenberg had said, "who as soon as you look at him, you say 'There's a university man.'" Rosenberg had looked approvingly at Darling's broad shoulders and well-kept waist, at his carefully brushed hair and his honest, wrinkle-less face. "Frankly, Mr. Darling, I am willing to make you a proposition. I have inquired about you, you are favorably known on your old campus, I understand you were in the backfield with Alfred Diederich."

Darling nodded. "Whatever happened to him?"

"He is walking around in a cast for seven years now. An iron brace. He played professional football and they broke his neck for him."

Darling smiled. That, at least, had turned out well.

"Our suits are an easy product to sell, Mr. Darling," Rosenberg said. "We have a handsome, custom-made garment. What has Brooks Brothers got that we haven't got? A name. No more."

"I can make fifty, sixty dollars a week," Darling said to Louise that night. "And expenses. I can save some money and then come back to New York and really get started here."

"Yes, Baby," Louise said.

"As it is," Darling said carefully, "I can make it back here once a month, and holidays and the summer. We can see each other often."

"Yes, Baby." He looked at her face, lovelier now at thirty-five than it had ever been before, but fogged over now as it had been for five years with a kind of patient, kindly, remote boredom.

"What do you say?" he asked. "Should I take it?" Deep within him he hoped fiercely, longingly, for her to say, "No, Baby, you stay right here," but she said, as he knew she'd say, "I think you'd better take it."

He nodded. He had to get up and stand with his back to her,

looking out the window, because there were things plain on his face that she had never seen in the fifteen years she'd known him. "Fifty dollars is a lot of money," he said. "I never thought I'd ever see fifty dollars again." He laughed. Louise laughed, too.

* * *

Christian Darling sat on the frail green grass of the practice field. The shadow of the stadium had reached out and covered him. In the distance the lights of the university shone a little mistily in the light haze of evening. Fifteen years. Flaherty even now was calling for his wife, buying her a drink, filling whatever bar they were in with that voice of his and that easy laugh. Darling half-closed his eyes, almost saw the boy fifteen years ago reach for the pass, slip the halfback, go skittering lightly down the field, his knees high and fast and graceful, smiling to himself because he knew he was going to get past the safety man. That was the high point, Darling thought, fifteen years ago, on an autumn afternoon, twenty years old and far from death, with the air coming easily into his lungs, and a deep feeling inside him that he could do anything, knock over anybody, outrun whatever had to be outrun. And the shower after and the three glasses of water and the cool night air on his damp head and Louise sitting hatless in the open car with a smile and the first kiss she ever really meant. The high point, an eighty-yard run in the practice, and a girl's kiss and everything after that a decline. Darling laughed. He had practiced the wrong thing, perhaps. He hadn't practiced for 1929 and New York City and a girl who would turn into a woman. Somewhere, he thought, there must have been a point where she moved up to me, was even with me for a moment, when I could have held her hand, if I'd known, held tight, gone with her. Well, he'd never known. Here he was on a playing field that was fifteen years away and his wife was in another city having dinner with another and better man, speaking with him a different, new language, a language nobody had ever taught him.

Darling stood up, smiled a little, because if he didn't smile he knew the tears would come. He looked around him. This was the spot. O'Connor's pass had come sliding out just to here . . . the high point. Darling put up his hands, felt all over again the flat slap of the ball. He shook his hips to throw off the halfback, cut back inside the center, picked his knees high as he ran gracefully over two men jumbled on the ground at the line of scrimmage,

ran easily, gaining speed, for ten yards, holding the ball lightly in his two hands, swung away from the halfback diving at him, ran, swinging his hips in the almost girlish manner of a back in a broken field, tore into the safety man, his shoes drumming heavily on the turf, stiff-armed, elbow locked, pivoted, raced lightly and exultantly for the goal line.

It was only after he had sped over the goal-line and slowed to a trot that he saw the boy and girl sitting together on the turf, looking at him wonderingly.

He stopped short, dropping his arms. "I . . ." he said, gasping a little though his condition was fine and the run hadn't winded him, "I . . . Once I played here."

The boy and the girl said nothing. Darling laughed embarrassedly, looked hard at them sitting there, close to each other, shrugged, turned and went toward his hotel, the sweat breaking out on his face and running down into his collar.

The Old Battler

by Harry Bolton

The Western Union kid comes to the door. He has twelve telegrams. The Postal Telegraph is on his heels. He has twelve telegrams. They are from fighters in and around Chicago, nine hundred miles away. They all read about the same. "Hold off the old battler's funeral one day so I can attend."

So two days after the old battler, fighter of fighters who fought them all, died in a bughouse from an operation to mend his beaten old skull-piece, guys in the Gilt-Edge Club, a ninety-five per cent fighter's club, the old battler's club, were waiting.

Pinky Ferris, a skinny bantamweight who has a six-inch reach, longer than he has any business having, links his middle fingers, holds out his arms, then sticks his right elbow through the crook of his left arm and pulls the circle around his neck. Pinky always does that when he feels bad. He did it when his father and mother died. He did it when his brother was killed. He did it when his sister went haywire. He did it when his wife went haywire. He is doing it now.

The door opens and Father Dennis of St. Michael's Church and the long bearded Hebrew from the synagogue come in. They chew the fat with the guys for a few minutes and as they go out, leave $20 apiece for the Gilt-Edge to do as it feels like.

Gold-Tooth Marty answers a knock and comes back.

"Hey, hey," says the Gold-Tooth. "Here's a reet, a reet of lilies I guess and some kind of damn vine. And witness the writing on the little card, witness the writing. Do I know dat writing? Dat's may sister's writing, and I tot I saw her coming out of Cullen's flower shop two blocks off—and I could have used dat dough, I could have used dat dough. Say, I know her writing but I can't read it, what's she say? Oh, 'Rest, old battler, you win.' Well, I'll let her get away wit it dis time."

In comes Butch Parker, a Class-A heavyweight wrestler. The Gilt-Edge Club is a ninety-five per cent fighter's club and wrestlers and weight-lifters who belong, take a terrible razzing all the time, or most all the time that is. Butch swings through and fingers

something to Doc Hines, the secretary. Butch is grumpy. "Gilt-Edge to Maud," he says. And Doc puts one hundred dollars away for Maud.

And now the Gilt-Edge guys are about ready to go to the old battler's funeral.

A guy comes in who is old, but he is slick and trim and agile. A toad could tell he has been a champion. He wears dark sun glasses and his nostrils are red. A guy or two says, "Hello, Jimmy. How are you, old fellow?"

A woman comes in. She has been and still is what the guys call a dinger. She is wearing dark sun glasses and her nostrils are red. A couple guys or so say, "Hello, Maud."

The doors of the Gilt-Edge Club are now closed and locked and there is nobody inside. They are at the old battler's funeral.

* * *

And now that the Gilt-Edge is open again a few guys are shuffling around, refusing to play stuss, coon-can, bottle-pool or anything else.

Gympy-Well-Man-Well Berger says, "He hit. In Brooklyn he broke my nose and jaw."

Hard Willie Carome remembered, "I fought him his last fight. We fought nine times all told. He was a good guy."

Sixty-five-year-old Tom Allin with the clean, clear skin and the face that would light up a technicolor movie, remembered, "I've rubbed him down a thousand times and always he reached in his jeans and says, 'Here Tom is a few stray dimes for your steam yacht.' "

Manager Manny Fern, who managed the old battler for a year, remembered, "I should have had eighty per cent, but I never had the heart to take over fifty off him, and now he's dead, I'm glad I was such an old sucker, such an old softy."

Mike (Twin) O'Hearn remembered, "Twin Jack and I both fought him, twice. They've never come any gamer. Not since guts was invented. He was a gay, happy guy too. Gay, and he liked to sing and he liked to play that old jew's-harp he always had with him. He was a comical guy, too. Twin Jack had him strung on the ropes in Frisco and was pouring them into his belly, elbow deep, when some ringsider yells, 'That's the place, Jack, that's the place, he don't like them down there.'

"The old battler was sick, dog sick, but he grins and yells, 'You know somebody that does?' "

Porky Willis remembered, "Yeah, he was all you say, Mike, all you say."

Red Shay remembered, "He was smart as hell, too, after all. He seconds me once in Baltimore. I'm fighting Young Malin. I am substituting and am all out of shape. In four rounds my fanny is brushing the rozzin off the canvas. Young Malin is all gone too, but I don't know it then. End of the fifth round, they had to lug me to my corner. I tell the old battler, 'I'm done, I'm done. I can't get up on my feet.'

"He says, 'Worry about that some other time, wait till the bell rings—that's what it's for.'

"At the bell, I try to get up and the old battler lifts at me under the arms, but bigod no monkey business I can't get on my feet. The old battler sees it, then he sticks the small end of the water bottle between the stool and my fanny, gives a quick pry on it, and jumps from the ring. Whoosh, Whoosh Baby, nobody could take a goosin' like that, so up I comes, but my feet are spread three miles apart and still spreading and I am falling backwards when something cold in the small of my back stops me. It is the old battler reachin' from behind me. His own reach is too short, so he steals a little by holding the water bottle straight out at arm's length. The bottom just reaches me as I am leaning back at an angle of forty-five degrees, and he is calling, 'Stay on your feet, Red, stay on your feet. Malin can't get up either. Stay on your feet, Red, stay on your feet.' And so, with a little help like the old battler's brain work and a long-necked water bottle, Red Shay wins himself another fight."

Punch drunk Kid Hayes stumbled up, mumbling, then remembered, partly, "Kid Hayes always licked the old battler, Kid Hayes always licked him but Kid Hayes always liked the old battler, because he showed Kid Hayes which hand was the best hand to use to give left hooks."

Puddler Ryan, once a runner-up for the championship but now no sturdier than a paper bag, remembered, "He never carried many guys and he never asked any carrying for himself, but he carried me when I was breaking up with this T. B."

And now the Gilt-Edge is exiting guys for the night. Ten o'clock, three hours earlier than usual and the place is dark and

empty except for one small light and two guys in the storeroom. One guy is Tommy Root, an around-the-world hobo fighter, and pretty much a stranger. The other guy is Billy McCuan, Old-Stove-Up Billy, "Pretzel-Legs Billy or Call-me-just-so-you-call-me Billy, but mostly Anisette-and-Absinthe Billy. Just the same, Billy once drew with a champion twice.

Tommy and Billy are down and out and they keep the place cleaned up for meal tickets, for a four-bit piece occasionally, and flops in the storeroom. They are brushing off tobacco crumbs from the blankets now and otherwise preparing to sack a little shut-eye.

Tommy is getting very gabby.

"Shut up," says Billy, "don't talk to me tonight."

For three hours there is plenty squeaking from the cots but not any snoring from the boys. Billy unwinds himself, gets up and says, "I'm going to get a bottle."

In maybe an hour, maybe an hour and a half, Billy says, "Shut up. Let me talk awhile. Anyhow shut up about Australia. And shut up about Arkansas and Tennessee where you had such nice corn cakes with more side-meat than you could eat, because I been down there and there ain't no Milk and Honey Route nowhere near. And in one of those states I flashed a $5.00 bill and they run me out of the state. They claimed I was a foreigner.

"And shut up mentioning that you think young Skip Turner has a thimbleful of colored blood, or the Gilt-Edge must break out its rubber blanket and Billy McCuan must go around with a dustpan and a tablecloth brush and pick up your knee caps and butt-muscles, your tongue and your heart. Another thing, although I'd die before I'd mention it, Billy McCuan got that bottle partly for his own use, so hand it over.

"But the main thing around here is, don't keep on using the Gilt-Edge's face towels to shine your damn shoes. Last February I had two brothers killed for doing that dirty trick, and our own family won't allow any markers on their graves.

"Another thing to shut up about is asking why Jimmy draws so much water around here at all times, and why guys is so extra respectful today. And as long as I want you to shut up about practically everything, shut up about asking what all about Maud. What do you mean, anyhow, what all about her. I told you once that she was his wife, didn't I? You got a working knowledge of the English language by this time, ain't you?

"Here, kill yourself, but leave me what will correspond to a drink.

"And shut up about asking me how long I knew the old battler. Twenty-seven years. And we trained together and we roomed together and we eat together and we catted around together ten, eleven years off and on. And I fought him five times, I suppose that's some of your goddam business too.

"Oh go on kill it, kill it for crysake's kill it. You don't suppose I got just one bottle, do you? Or do you? Thanks. You're swell. I never saw a guy yet, if he tried to gab all the time about Australia, that wouldn't sneak two drinks for one if he had a chance.

"They buried the old battler today. He's dead.

"One time the old battler and I quit fighting for awhile and charted us a flossy place to give private boxing lessons only. High class as hell it was. Cost five dollars to spit in our cuspidor. That kind of a place.

"That was funny. Afterwards, that was funny. Good joke on the old battler and me. We quit fighting, see, just got tired of training. We figure no more roadwork, our feet are wore off to above the ankle now. No more nothing, just tell guys, 'Do this.'

"We pay two months' rent, second floor, Paul Building. We were going to pay one year's rent, but we misjudged a couple goats at Moncrief Park, Jacksonville. But we still hold $2,200. We buy lotta stuff, partitions office room, reception room—oh, my yes it was that kind of a place—two rub rooms, two private-lessons rooms, exercise rooms, oh, everything. Buy swell furniture, office reception room. Buy two big mats, four small ones. Buy apparatuses all kind. Cost dough. But old battler and me, we don't care. Won't have to train any more. Just tell guys, 'Do this.'

"Everything's ready except big sign at entrance and steam bath cabinets. Steam bath cabinet guys want $800. We got $800 all right but we ain't going pay that much. Old battler and me, we shop around. One day we see a guy stuck up. Main stem. Daylight. Makes us nervous then to carry all our dough. Next morning in bed, old battler sits up.

" 'Hey, Billy, I got a stunt. I show you. You get up and bring me over that rack with all our neckties on it, and I show you.'

"I says, 'Certainly, certainly, I'll get up and bring over that rack with all your neckties on it. Or else I'll get a man right away to do it for me. Or else I'll give you such a wham in the eye that

your hips will get black and blue. Get up your ownself and get down that rack with all our neckties on it.'

"Old battler he gets up, gets the neckties and he says,

" 'See, these old crummy ones what a bum wouldn't wear—mostly yours, but I'm glad now you're stingy and don't care how you look—see, we poke a big bill or two way up in the end. See, they stick there, and these lousy things of yours don't look any more lousy or different than they did before. Now see, if some sneak thief should come around it's a cinch he won't touch these greasy ragged old neckties—mostly yours.'

"Well, yes, thanks, I'll take a couple drinks on you, seein' I bought it. And now, you know what happened? Ha, you're pretty smart, you been sneakin' off to the theatre or readin' books or something. But that's right, some guy steals them. We lose 950 bucks. Big joke on old battler and me, for hadda get a couple fights and start training again, we hadda start training again after all.

"No jokes like that in Australia. No jokes like that in that bare-toed state you gabbed so much about. They wouldn' have that much money. Their state capitol cost only 300 bucks.

"That was a good joke on old battler and Billy McCuan. Hadda train again after all. No, that was no joke. Hadda train again for fights get back dough for steam bath cabinet guys and make us wait three weeks before we can tell guys, 'Do this.'

"Tomorrow I'll tell you better joke on old battler and me. Same steam bath cabinets, too. Guy locks us in steam bath cabinets all night. Steam on too. Just old battler's head outside. Just Billy McCuan's head outside, too. Nearly cook us to death. Guy nearly talk us to death.

"Fought him five times, fought him five times.

"Understand was buried. Dead, I suppose."

Apprentice of Manly Art

by Morton Thompson

He threw his left leg over the second rope and then his body writhed through and his right leg followed limply and he was standing up and waiting self-consciously for the announcer to flip the little piece of black and white cardboard.

Behind him his manager and one of the boys who was acting as his second bumped into him as they clambered through the ropes into the ring. The round piece of cardboard was spinning way up beyond the bright light high over the middle of the ring. Everybody's eyes followed it. Then they swung down as it fell and it turned up white and he jerked and went to the white corner. He had on the old red and grey bathrobe. The one Mom gave him two years ago for Christmas. It was too small. Here and there if you looked close you could see the threads. Mom wore it around the house sometimes. The boy who was acting as his second pushed the stool under him. It hit against his legs at the back and he sat down. He stretched his legs out in front of him. The other boy was coming into the ring now. He had on a pretty cheap looking outfit. Just swimming trunks and sneakers. No bathrobe or nothing. In the dressing room he'd had to borrow a cup and a jock from one of the boys.

His manager was rubbing the back of his neck gently. Then he reached behind him and pulled up the bottle. The bottle was covered with bicycle tape to keep it from flying in case it broke. His manager was tilting the bottle into his face. With one hand the manager held his mouth open. He rested the neck of the bottle on that hand. That was so his teeth wouldn't click against the neck. He swilled the water around in his mouth and his manager began to rub his legs a little.

When the dry feeling was gone he spit out into the funnel that had a tube attached to it. The second crouched on his heels beside him. The crowd was getting restless. Two drunks in ringside kept telling him to kill the other boy. A blonde woman with a hard face was screaming at him. Her man looked uncomfortable. Some of the woman's hair was coming down.

The referee was climbing into the ring. The referee was so big he could have held a beer barrel on one palm. He was a retired world's heavy-weight champion. When boys didn't fight he kicked them out of the ring. When a fellow went down and he suspected the boy was taking a dive the referee would stand over him with his hands on his hips looking like he wanted to spit on him. When you went into the ring with that referee you knew you were on your own. He wouldn't deign to notice anything but the most flagrant fouling. It was just up to you to protect yourself, that was all.

He hoped he'd make out all right tonight. This was his fifth fight in three weeks. You weren't supposed to fight too often. Forty-eight hours or something. But three bucks was three bucks. The other boy didn't look so tough either. His manager was telling him just to go in there and feel him out for a round. He listened and nodded with his mind a million miles off. If he won tonight he'd get another certificate. They weren't good for anything. But they looked nice. Seal of the athletic commission and all. He had eighteen so far. Eighteen wins out of twenty-seven fights. Some fellows waited until they had a hundred fights before they turned pro. Pro was where you made the money. Down at Pico the boys in the prelims got six bucks for four rounds. Two bucks went to the the manager's cut. Joe Andreadi went pro too soon and nearly got killed. A pro license cost ten bucks, too. The manager draped his bathrobe over his shoulders.

The announcer was hollering in a high squeaky voice. He waved his arm. The arm came to rest pointing rigidly, accusingly right in his face. In this cawn-uh, he was saying, we have Louis, Dynamite, Peters from Chatsworth. There was a faint tinge of derision in the way he said Dynamite. He got up while the crowd was yelling smilingly, appreciatively and without looking at anyone bobbed his head from this side to that. He kept his gloved hands crossed to keep the bathrobe from sliding off. He waited. The announcer was ending—Walterson, C.C.C. Camp. The other boy got up too. He looked green as hell. He looked nervous. Probably hadn't had many fights. His manager put his arm around his shoulders. They were walking toward the center of the ring. It was the third spot. The referee pulled at his hands to make sure he hadn't any plaster under his gloves. Then he looked at the other boy's shoulders and wiped some of the grease off. You put grease on yourself to keep the skin from cracking and bleeding when you got socked. The

referee was saying menacingly: break clean when I tell you to, protect yourself at all times, no holding and hitting, shake hands now and go to your corners and come out fighting. He went to his corner. His manager took the bathrobe from his shoulders. He mumbled a parting something in his ear. Then he slipped through the ropes. The referee was leaning against the ropes in one corner. The other boy was standing up looking at him. Finally the bell rang.

He stepped in and out for a few seconds. The hard ball in his stomach began to get worse. His throat was dry as cotton again. The rubber guard over his teeth stuck to his lips. The other boy kept bobbing away. He looked pretty clumsy. He looked scared too. Suddenly he got a terrific wallop right over the mouth. It rocked him all over. Little lights went spinning. Then the lights went away and he felt cold suddenly and he had his hands up and he was crouching over and the other boy was flailing away at him crazily. The hard ball was gone. His mouth was full of spit. He saw an opening big as a delivery door.

He let loose a hard looping left. The green boy went down. He went to his corner. The referee began to count. When he reached six the green boy got up on one knee and before he could say seven he was on his feet waiting. The green boy backed away. He put both hands in front of his face and crouched over. He would not fight. The crowd began to boo. The blonde woman was screaming and screaming and screaming. The referee started towards them. He said to the green boy in a low voice, c'mon and fight. The ref's coming over and the crowd's getting mad. He acted the same way when he was green. A wiser boy had whispered to him just like that too. Then as soon as he put his hands down to obey, the other boy had knocked him smash in the stomach. He waited to see if the green boy would drop his hands. He had his left ready for a hook. The hook should land right over the liver. But the green boy came out flailing all of a sudden and the ref went back and leaned on the ropes again and the crowd stopped booing like magic. Blood was running out of his nose. The green boy had found him with one. He'd better play cautious. He started to feint. The bell rang.

The second was in the ring like a weasel. The manager climbed ponderously. The second sat him down on the little stool. The manager began to rub the back of his neck and his chest again. The second was rolling the muscles of his outflung legs like his life depended on it. When he acted somebody else's second he

did the same thing. Then the manager was tilting a mouthful of water into him. While he was rolling it around the blood kept dribbling from his nose over his lips. The manager was dousing his chest with water. The manager put his hand under his trunks between his jock strap and his belly. He pulled the constricting elastic away. He pushed hard with his palm. The second was holding the funnel at his mouth. He turned his head and spit. He saw the blonde woman. She was still screaming. Then the manager pushed against his belly again and he took a deep rhythmic breath. Push and breathe, push and breathe. The elastic snapped back against his belly. The manager was sponging his nose. He put some adrenalin on a swab and pushed it up. The bleeding stopped. His nose felt funny. If it was broken it would take ten fights to get it fixed and he couldn't fight when it was broken. He hadn't had a job in months. Last time it was in a feed store. The feed store man came to the fights and he liked to tell him what to do and have the kid wave at him from the ring. He never listened to him. The guy was awful dumb about fighting. After awhile the guy got tired of fights and then the job was over. His manager was wiping him off. The bell rang.

The referee clapped his hands. His manager was hollering at him from below the ring: do what I tole ya. Gw'an! Gw'an! He tried to remember what he knew he hadn't heard. Automatically he remembered from the last round he was supposed to be careful. The kid was green but he had an awful wallop. He might do anything with a wild swing. The thing to do was chop him down slowly. Not take any chances. He led with a left jab. It landed. He led with another. The green kid's head snapped back. He led with another and another and another and another. Fast. The green kid covered up his head and rushed into him. He waited. Finally the ref came over and peeled them apart. The green kid let loose a tremendous swing. It whistled harmlessly. They were in another clinch. The ref broke them apart again. Then it happened. The green kid let loose another flurry. One of them landed. It hit him right over the cup. The crowd was on its feet yelling and booing. The ref was looking disgusted as if he had taken a dive. He tried to get up but the pain in his groins crippled him. The ring would go black, and sulphur smelled and his loins were a sickening ache. The cup felt like a brick pressing in on him there. He put both gloved hands over the cup and doubled up on the canvas his el-

bows sticking out straight. The ref was shouting in his ear, get up you yellow rat there's nothing the matter with you. The crowd was yelling and booing. The ref was counting. When he reached five he tried to get up. He fell back again. It didn't hurt so much any more. He just couldn't get up that was all. The ref was saying, quit your stalling you lousy punk if you expect to get any more fights around here. When the ref counted nine he tried to get up again. He made it. He kept his hands over the cup. He just kept them there automatically. The green kid hit him in the face. He smashed him again and again in the face. He could taste blood all through his mouth. His ear stung and the nose was bleeding again. He was wobbling from side to side. The crowd was hollering stop the fight, stop the fight, stop the fight, and the blonde woman was screaming and screaming and her hair was coming all down. Her lips were bared back from her teeth and her eyes were wide and she was screaming without any stop. He was about to go down again. The bell rang.

His manager met him in the middle of the ring and his second too and they helped him to his corner. The boy who was acting as his second was on him like a flash. He pulled his legs down straight. Then he pulled his pants away from his stomach and reached down into his jock strap and pulled the cup out. The curved piece of padded aluminum was dented right in the middle. The ref was standing there and the second handed it to him to look at. He said you can't say this isn't a foul. He said how about giving us the fight on a foul. The ref looked him right in the eye. He said to the second, you can't hurt a man with one of those cups on. He ain't hurt anyhow. Put that cup back and get him together. The ref stalked off. He liked to give the crowd their money's worth. He was so big himself he couldn't imagine anyone else ever being hurt. The second looked at him mad as hell. He said you dirty sonofabitch-bastard under his breath at the ref. Then he put the cup back. It was cold against his flesh. They didn't waste any time rubbing his belly this time. They slapped him a little and the manager kept holding the smelling salts under his nose and he sniffed and sniffed and he couldn't smell anything until all of a sudden he got a tremendous whiff and his head cleared and the bell rang again.

He thought as he got up, it's the last round, if I can only last out the last round I'll be all right. They were in the center of the

ring and the ref was telling them to shake hands and they shook hands and then he stepped back and hit the green kid with a terrific right hand before the kid had a chance to get his hands up from shaking hands. The kid went down like a log. He walked to a neutral corner. The crowd was screaming all over again. Some of them were booing but not many. His groin felt like a tight rubber band from the force of the punch. The kid on the floor was getting up groggily. He swayed around looking for a clinch. As the green kid came toward him with head down and hands in front of his face he stepped back coolly and sank a jaggling left into his stomach. The green kid doubled over in agony. He was about to drop, only as he staggered he caught him with another whistler right over his ear and that drove them both into a clinch and the green kid held on like death and the ref couldn't part them and all of a sudden he did part them and they flew apart like sacks. Then the green kid's arm swung feebly out and he drew back. He was cold as ice now. The crowd was hollering for the kill. He smashed a right to the jaw. He smashed two rights to the body. The green kid sagged. He smashed a right to the jaw and a left to the body. As the green kid fell floorwards he let loose one more terrific finisher that landed on the left kidney. Then he walked back to his corner. The din was like the noise a seashell made when you held it against your ear. His manager was hollering down to some ringside people what dya think of *that* for a seventeen year old kid and the second was grinning. The manager was happy. He remembered and went back and offered to help lug the green kid to his corner but the green kid's CCC camp buddies were there already and they looked at him sourly and told him to gwan home so he went back and they draped his bathrobe over him and he was all hot and sweaty and bloody and the blonde woman was still screaming and leaning over to touch him and she scratched him all down his right thigh and the man with her pulled her back and he was through the ropes and up the aisle and guys pulling at him and patting his back and he was grinning.

When he finished his shower the crowd was hollering while two other guys were slugging it out. The man at the admission gate window handed him three dollars and the inspector said, nice fight Louie, you put up a very nice little battle there old kid, and some of the other boys said, nice fight, Louie, nice goin old boy, and the

match-maker rushed over and said to be sure and be there next week, nice goin, Louie old boy, sweet fight, nice goin.

Then he went out into the night air and it felt swell. He went behind the arena and got out his bike. He took out a key and unlocked the lock that fitted between the spokes. Some guy stole a bike off him once after he'd worked for it three years. When he got onto the bike and began pedaling home his crotch hurt a little still but the pain was going away and he had four miles to go and he'd be home.

When he got home, Mom said to him, how did you come out Louie, and he answered, ok Mom, I knocked him out third round, he hit me some pretty tough ones, and Mom said, you'll be getting yourself killed some of these days too and then you'll be satisfied and he gave her two dollars and stuck the other dollar back in his pocket and she shook her head.

There's a new man moved down by the Wimble place might be able to use some help sacking onions Mom said and you'd best go down see him tomorrow. Joe Orfin was tellin me today. Sackin onions was swell. Guys got 20-30 cents an hour. He could train at night time. He said boy I sure will. He sat around for a little while reading. Then he went to bed.

The Football Story

by E. A. Durand

A FINE END I've come to. And through no fault of my own, either. But that doesn't help matters any. If I had had anything to say about it I would have ridden on in a blaze of glory to a happy ending. But did I have anything to say about it? Did I have anything to say about anything? I should say not. My author had the whole say right from the beginning. And that was all right with me. But what did he have to go and let me down for? And so suddenly, too. Right at the peak of my career. I suppose he thinks, in his superior way, that I don't mind it here in the wastebasket! Well, it may be all right for tailor bills and essays on new thought, but not for Jack Weston, All-American quarter! That is, I would have made All-American if my author hadn't given up.

We had gotten to be such good friends, Fred and I, and I had such faith in him. Fred—that's what I called my author—gave me everything: a wonderful physique, a logical and quick-thinking mind, a zest for life, and no inhibitions or complexes except the hero one. His own words—the words with which he started the story of my life—may better describe me.

"Jack Weston, one hundred and ninety pounds of bone and muscle, the crack quarterback of Lincoln Prep, stood on the thirty-nine-yard line, his alert brain quickly analyzing the situation."

There. Could anyone wish for a better start than that? My own reaction was that the thirty-nine-yard line was a swell place to start one's life, taking into consideration the one hundred and ninety pounds and the alert brain. But what to do? Suppose you suddenly came into being standing on the thirty-nine-yard line, quickly analyzing a situation? What would you do? Well, I'll tell you what I did. Or rather, I'll let Fred tell you.

"The score was six to nothing against Lincoln with one minute to play. Jack hesitated only an instant and then started barking out his signals in his confident staccato. 'Kick formation! 37—42—59.' The coach sat on the bench, aghast. What was Weston thinking of! Why, that play was suicide! It hadn't a chance in the world!"

But the coach figured without Fred. Fred knew what to do. "The ball came rifling back from center. Jack deftly gathered in the pigskin and started out wide around his left end. He gathered momentum quickly, his powerful legs working like pistons. The opposing team was caught flatfooted. Who but a madman would try such a play on fourth down with ten to go? When they snapped out of it, Jack was already around the end, the effortless motion of his lithe body belying the speed with which his cleats were eating up the distance to the goal line. There were only two men who had a chance to stop him!"

Well, Fred, what do I do now? I suppose it depends on the appetite of my cleats.

"He changed direction in a flash. A right-angle pivot top speed! What co-ordination!"

There, you see, Fred didn't desert me. It was things like this that built up my confidence in Fred. That's why I feel so forsaken here in the wastebasket.

"There was one man left in Weston's way—Brandt Bilkes, Jack's arch rival through four years of prep school. Could he stop him?"

Good old Brandt. Always in there trying to stop me and never doing it. Must have been discouraging. He made some nice tries, though. Like this next.

"He set himself for the tackle. Jack was bearing down on him like one of those new, streamline, Diesel engine, railroad trains. Brandt lunged forward, but his arms closed on empty air. Jack stepped over the goal line, once more the hero of Lincoln Prep."

Then I kicked a beautiful drop-kick for the extra, and winning point. Oh, yes, Fred made me versatile. I could punt and pass, too. In short, the ideal football star. A coach's dream. And modest? Why, in one part of the story when someone asks me if I play football, Fred has me say, "Yes, a little." A little, eh? Damn near a one man team!

During the next few months, or paragraphs, Fred did a lot for me. He gave me a background. I was the only son of a fine, American family. My father had died during my early childhood, but I had the sweetest mother in the world whose whole life was lived for her wonderful son. She sent me to Lincoln Prep for my education where I studied diligently and stood highest in my class. I was upright and square, had a fine disposition, and was champion of the

underdog. So, you see, it was pretty hard for me to go wrong with Fred arranging matters.

But I did go wrong. And it was o.k. with me. It was Fred's idea anyway. Had to have a plot, he said. And I always let Fred have his way. Couldn't do much else.

It seems that while I was cavorting between the football field and the class room, my poor mother was, unbeknownst to me, having difficulties in a financial way. You know, the old story. Tuition to be paid, graduation expenses, and, of course, the interest on the mortgage due. About this time, Fred started having difficulties, as was evidenced by the parts he X-ed out and the parts he penciled in. There was one little scene between my mother and Old Skrunck, who held the mortgage.

"Oh, Mr. Skrunck," said my mother, "have mercy on an old lady with a fine upstanding son in Lincoln Prep where he stands highest in his class, and, I understand, plays football, if one can believe the papers."

But Old Skrunck was "adamant"—a nice word, Fred—and left my mother in tears, "knowing not which way to turn."

Now, I thought that was a fine, dramatic touch, that scene. It would give the *reader* a few tears. But Fred X-ed it out. Said it was overdrawn. All I could think of was a crack like, so was my mother's bank account, so I let it go.

Well, to get on with the story, there comes a day in June.

"Jack sat in his study, looking out over the greensward that was the Lincoln Campus. He was writing the Valedictory Address which, as highest in his class, he was to deliver at the graduation exercises. To look at his placid countenance one would not guess the emotional turmoil that was going on within him. The thought of leaving those hallowed halls brought mental tears, though his eyes were dry. Then the realization would surge over him that next year would find him at Yale, and leave him in mental ecstasy. Would anyone think that fate was about to deal this fine young man a dreadful blow?"

"Listen, Fred, don't blame fate. You did all the dealing. And with a stacked deck, too.

"But such was the case. There was a knock at the door. It seemed to jerk Weston back to the present from both the past and the future."

At any rate, Fred had fate deal me a bobtail flush in the form of

a letter from a friend of mine at home. This letter told me of my "poor old mother's plight." So I sat there waiting for Fred to figure a way out of this difficulty, which, presently, he did. It seems I had received several offers from different colleges of cold cash to enter their respective institutions.

"As nearly as Jack could figure it, his mother would need at least two thousand dollars. And the best offer he had received was for fifteen hundred, which was very flattering but not adequate. There was another offer of one thousand. If he could only accept both of these! He *must* help his mother. To Jack she was more important than God, his country, or Yale.

"He looked at the two letters idly. What was this? Coach Snodgrass of Wantoona U. who had offered the one thousand dollars, had included in his letter the football schedule for the next fall. And, Jack noted, they played all their games on Friday evenings, under floodlights. Weston quickly turned to the other letter. It was from Spagoda Tech. Their schedule was also included, and they played all their games on the traditional Saturday afternoons. The solution to his problem was at once evident to Jack. (Just a quick thinker, that's me.) He would accept both offers. Could a man do less for his mother?"

Could Fred do more for me? It seems he could. He gave me phony names, phony records, (those good marks I got in prep school all went for nothing) and enrolled me in both Wantoona U. and Spagoda Tech. He situated these colleges in the Middle West, about thirty miles apart. There were, of course, a number of difficulties, and the whole story seemed like a figurative steeplechase with Fred, Jack Weston up, taking the jumps in stride. Or maybe it was Jack Weston, Fred up. Anyway, Fred was the brains, which, I guess, is reiteration.

But let me tell you, in Fred's words, the events leading up to the travesty.

"Jack was duly matriculated at both colleges. Being a football player he never had to go to classes, and he split his afternoons between the two institutions. He practiced with Spagoda on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; with Wantoona on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Every Friday night he would play with Wantoona in their scheduled game and on Saturday with Spagoda. For Spagoda he used the name Dick Whipple, and for Wantoona, Tom Stubble.

"As the season wore on, the football world was, each succeeding

week, set on fire by these two great quarterbacks, Whipple and Stubble, who were leading their respective teams to decisive victories. Controversy raged throughout the country as to which was the better. Committees which had been chosen to choose the All-American team were hoping that one of these two stars would show some weakness and make their task easier.

"But neither man weakened, and week after week Wantoona and Spagoda triumphed, due solely to the physical and mental genius of Stubble and Whipple."

Well, you can see what was going to happen. The game was scheduled, the receipts to go to charity. A new stadium was built to accommodate the vast throng who would storm the gates. Scalpers would be getting as high as forty dollars a ticket for the fifty-yard line. All stuff like that.

"It was New Year's Eve. Jack Weston, alias Dick Whipple, alias Tom Stubble, was in a quandary."

Well, Fred wasn't in any big, blue limousine himself. He'd put me on the spot and couldn't get me off except by the wastebasket route. It wasn't without a struggle, though, I'll say that for him. He thought and thought, but couldn't figure out a logical conclusion. And so there I was on the eve of the big game, forsaken.

It would have been very easy just to forget the whole thing. But I couldn't. Think of those thousands of people waiting to see me. I couldn't disappoint them. And anyway, I wanted to go on living and being a hero. "God damn it," I thought, "I will, Fred or no Fred."

So, having decided to continue on my own hook, what was I to do? Well, whatever it was it had to be done quickly for tomorrow was the big game.

"The first thing to do," I said to myself, "is to see what the other 'characters' in the story think about continuing without Fred, and find out if they have any ideas."

I found my mother back on the third page, so I said, "Hello, Mom, what do you think of Fred dumping us all into the wastebasket?"

"Who, me?" said Mom. "Why I think it's fine. It's the only *good* idea Fred ever had. I was getting pretty well fed up with his having me slave away my life, taking in washing and being a martyr so a big, healthy good-for-nothing like you could waste your time being upright and square and playing football. When I think back—"

Her voice trailed off, and so did I, in search of Old Skrunck. After the way my mother talked I didn't expect much help from Skrunck.

Fred had painted him pretty mean. But I decided to try him anyway.

I found him on page six.

"Mr. Skrunck," I said, hopefully, "what do you think of Fred dumping us all in the wastebasket?"

"Oh, Hello, Jack," he replied, dreamily. "Isn't it lovely here? I'm so glad Frederick gave up. Goodness knows I didn't like being mean. I like peace, and quiet, and good-will, and happiness. Can you imagine a man of my temperament putting penniless widows out in the street! Ugh! Now, be a good boy and go away. I'm going to sleep."

And to sleep he went, leaving me alone with my problem.

Well, let's see. There were Whipple and Stubble. I could count on their co-operation. But that still left just one of us. Brandt Bilkes. He was left. I found him on the first page.

I said, "Hello Brandt, old pal, how do you like being thrown in the wastebasket?"

"Oh, it's you again," he said, with a sneer. "I thought I had gotten rid of you. You and your high and mighty airs. Pal, eh! Thought you were pretty smart throwing me for losses all over the football field, didn't you? And now that you've been thrown for a loss yourself, you can't take it. Too bad you can't go on playing hero. As for me, I've had enough. I'm glad it's all over. And I'm glad you've been reduced to scrap paper, too. Well, so long, Hero, see you in the trash heap."

Trash heap, eh! Not if I knew it. Maybe if I went a little farther afield than my own story. I took a look around the basket. Here was some stuff. *Can a Man Have a Family and Also a Career?* No, that wouldn't help any. *Fun in the Himalayas.* No good, either. *Nudism at a Glance.* Not yet. What was this? *John Masters: Pioneer.* That sounded better, so I read what followed.

"John Masters, one hundred and ninety pounds of bone and muscle, crouched behind a big oak, his alert brain quickly analyzing the situation."

That sounded vaguely familiar. I read on.

"Though he could not hear a sound he knew that Indians,

treacherous Iroquois, were closing in on him. He hesitated only an instant."

And there it ended. I guess Fred gave up right at the beginning on that one. Well, that was all right with me. And maybe John Masters could help me with my problem.

He seemed like a fellow with the right angle. Say, why couldn't he play on one of those teams for me tomorrow? He certainly answered my description. It was an idea anyway.

I took a chance and spoke to him.

"Oh, pardon me, Mr. Masters," I said, "but if you can leave those Indians a moment, I'd like to make your acquaintance."

"Just call me John," he said. "I'm glad you come along. I been crouching behind this here oak, where Fred left me, long enough. The Indians is tired, too. So if you'll tell me your moniker and what's on your mind, I reckon we can git acquainted."

"My name's Jack, Jack Weston," I replied, "and I'd like to know what you think of being thrown in the wastebasket?"

"Well, I don't mind saying, in fact I even like saying, that I don't think a hell of a lot of it. But look here, who are you? I mean besides being Jack Weston? You seem to have me pretty well labeled, but I don't seem to recall you, that I remember."

"That's because I came after your time," I replied. "I read your story, what there was of it. That's why I know you. And I think you can help me."

So I told him my story.

"Well," he said, when I had finished, "it's all mighty int'restin', I reckon, to anyone who could understand it. As for me, I'll just have to take your word for it that you're in a predicament. All the same, it seems to me that to be surrounded by Indians is a hell of a lot worse than to be in one of them quandaries you was speakin' of. Nevertheless, you seem like a honest gent and, leastways, more fun than crouching here, so I'll go along with you and maybe we can git you out of this here mess. But don't think I'm goin' to understand that game you were talking about. It seems kinda silly and complicated to a Indian fighter."

"Now listen," I said, "don't despair. You can learn football. After all, you have one hundred and ninety pounds of bone and muscle, and an alert brain. That's all I had to start with and I became the greatest player in the country. You certainly haven't done so much Indian fighting that you can't turn to something else.

As a matter of fact, you've really done nothing but crouch. So get up and stretch, and I'll tell you what you're to do tomorrow. Why, man alive, don't you realize I'm giving you a chance for life!"

"I reckon you're right," he said, giving in, "and it's in your hands, Pard. Here's my hand on it."

I grasped his hand eagerly, and was pleased to note that the same look of determination lighted both our eyes.

"Now," I said, "we must go into a huddle and figure this thing out. The first thing to do is to change your name. You are now Dick Whipple, football star of Spagoda Tech. You must try and forget that you were ever anyone else. And so, Dick, here is the plan I have worked out."

I really hadn't worked it out very well, but I knew I had to keep him interested in my problem and confident in me.

"First," I began, "we'll have a rainy day tomorrow. This is easy to do in fiction. Just write it in. That will make it possible for us to get ourselves so muddy before we start that neither the spectators nor the players can tell us apart."

"But look here, Jack," interrupted John, "I should think that the first thing to do would be to give me a better idear about this here game, tomorrow. What kind of weapons do we use?"

I suppose the task of explaining twentieth century football to an eighteenth century Indian fighter and making it seem important, would daunt a less dauntless fellow. But am I not Jack Weston? I am! So I started to explain just what would happen on the morrow.

I told him only those things essential to his part in the play. His job would be to play defensive quarterback, or safety man, as he is called, for both teams. At this position he wouldn't have to know any signals. His main job would be to catch punts. I, of course, would make this easy for him by kicking right into his hands. Thus he would have nothing to do except play about forty yards back of whichever team was on the defensive. Whenever I kicked to him he was to catch the ball and run as far as he could in a straight line towards me. I, myself, would play offensive quarterback for both teams, changing sides with the ball.

I was certainly thankful that John had an alert brain. With anyone less smart I would have had an impossible task. Even as it was, it took considerable time and patience to explain his duties to him, simple as they might seem to you and me. There were a few

details like when to change goals and what to do between periods. You can imagine for yourself my difficulties. If I were Fred I could put all this down so much more clearly. Anyway, it's just fiction so let tomorrow come.

Day dawned! Night faded into day! Say it anyway you like. At any rate, it was the next day. The day of the big game.

I went over John's duties with him once more. Then I set about completing some preparations which did not concern him. I started the rain, wrote some headlines for the papers (*Whipple or Stubble —Which?—Never before in the history of football—All-American post at stake—*), and, finally, filled the stands to overflowing with wet fans who could not be kept away even by rain. I stopped the rain about two o'clock, giving the fans a break, and had the opening whistle blown at two-thirty.

Everything went fine during the first half. I made three touchdowns for each team, amid thunderous applause. What a game I played! And what a game John played. Of course, he didn't have to do anything but catch punts and run them back a few yards, but he did this so well no one even suspected what was going on.

Along about midway in the third quarter I decided it was time for another touchdown. I started out wide around the end for one of my spectacular runs. Just as I had got clear, bango! I went down with a thud and there was John hugging my knees. I hadn't told him anything about tackling. He certainly caught on quickly. And was he enjoying himself!

Thereafter, I couldn't seem to go anywhere without that dumb cluck of an Indian fighter barging into me. Here the game was, all tied up, 21 to 21, and if he kept up getting in my way that's how it would end. If I was going to be a hero I'd have to make another score. It didn't matter for which side.

The last quarter started. I used all the deceptive plays in the bag. But, no go. John didn't even know I was trying to deceive him.

The game dragged on. I was becoming more and more discouraged. And tired. With less than a minute to play I punted on fourth down. With a terrifying war-whoop John caught the ball. He was entering into the spirit of the thing a little too well. He knocked off about five would-be tacklers and romped right over the rest of them, leaving a clear field, except for me, to the goal. And could that boy war-whoop! No wonder Indians scared the early settlers to death.

I set myself for the tackle. John never swerved from his path. He hit me and rode over me like an avalanche.

From my position on the ground I saw him cross the goal line as the final gun sounded. I just lay there, watching him being carried off the field, a hero. I guess I should have quit when Fred did.

Portrait of a Worm Fisherman

by Lynn Montross

If an angleworm had ever invaded the Parmachene Club the shock might easily have been fatal to some of the more devout members. They were of a high-blood-pressure age and income, and as certified sportsmen they believed only in fly-fishing—preferably with dry flies. Their twelve-acre artificial pond, resulting from a cement dam across Owl Brook, was stocked each spring with expensive eight-and ten-inch squaretails from the State Hatchery; and memberships in Parmachene were as limited as they were costly.

On the other hand it would have been hard to find a blacker sinner than old Ned Putney, who chewed twist tobacco and brazenly fished with worms. But he was the only workman left in the countryside who could still swing an artistic adze, and Parmachene needed him in the remodeling of the clubhouse.

My part was that of the go-between, hearing both sides of the story. Coming originally from the city, I spoke the language of the summer residents who made up the club's membership; and having spent several winters in my New England home, I was so accepted by the local Yankees that they charged me no higher prices than they paid themselves.

Yet at my first interview, the old man was as obstinate as one of the oxen he drove behind a bright blue yoke. The tiny veins in his face—case histories of many an ancient hard-cider bout—sprang into fiery outline.

"Godfrey Mighty!" he roared, full-throated. "They ought to known better'n send you—the dum fools, I told 'em they didn't *need* no beams in that clubhouse. It ain't that kind of a house, can't they understand?"

I saw the point. What he meant was that the modern clubhouse was held together by nails. But the ancient Cape Cod type of dwelling, such as old Ned inhabited, was built from top to bottom of heavy, hand-hewn timbers of "pumpkin pine" interlocked at the ends and secured with wooden pegs. At the end of the 18th Century neighbors helped one another to put up these houses, using few tools and "leveling by eye." The first overhead beam became the "rum

pole," and the host kept a two-gallon jug of rum or brandy hanging from it. With such a gallant impetus, the massive framework went up in a few days of hand-labor; yet it was built to last for a few centuries, since a strain against any one beam is met by the united resistance of all the others.

"It's only for the *looks* of the thing," I explained again. "Sure, the clubhouse doesn't *need* overhead beams, but they'd look good lit up by the flames from the big field-stone fireplace, wouldn't they?"

Ned snorted like an aged stallion. "How could they look good if they wasn't needed?" he demanded fiercely.

Here was a principle of architecture that applied to modern skyscrapers as well as Cape Cod houses, so I retreated to the safer ground of economics. "What do you care? They're willing to pay well, you know, and you're the only one around here who can swing the job."

He still shook his head stubbornly, but I had a fifth ace up my sleeve. "I don't blame you, Ned," I said, beginning the exit from his front yard that horse-swapping craftiness demanded. "I suppose it's almost impossible to hollow out those timbers without splitting—"

"Hah!" he muttered. "So *that's* what they think?"

He was shrewd enough, of course, to scent my obvious trap; but he was utterly unable to resist any such compelling bait as a doubt of his craftsmanship. His adze was one of the very few things left on earth which the Machine Age couldn't challenge, and he was one of the last good adze-men left in all New England. "You go tell 'em," he said in a thick voice, "that I'll yoke up Dave and Diamond and be down after them timbers this afternoon."

As the faithful go-between I reported back to the clubhouse and was asked to lunch with the Committee on Remodeling, consisting of Mrs. Brantome (laundry machinery, Newark), Mrs. Soames (wholesale groceries, Worcester), and Mr. Bugby (paper towels, Brooklyn). The Committee was jubilant at the good news I brought. It seemed that when the clubhouse was first built, only comfort and utility had been considered by its masculine membership. The architecture, if such it could be called, had been shaken up like a cocktail: one part bungalow, two parts barracks, with a dash of log cabin. But as Parmachene prospered, and as trout-fishing became fashionable, the wives took a sudden and alarming interest. No Eden without its Eve, of course, and the middle-aged ladies of the

club decided that only a thorough remodeling along Colonial lines would do.

The question of overhead beams had been a poser until the architect had suggested that old timbers be hollowed out for lightness, and suspended from concealed steel plates, thus reversing their usual role of helping to suspend the house itself. "Can't you just see the lounge-room when it's done?" exclaimed Mrs. Brantome, half closing her eyes in facile ecstasy. "Pine-paneled walls and Revere lanterns wired for electricity and overhead the stained beams with the dimpled, hand-hewn marks on them?"

I replied that I could indeed vision the splendid effect. Meanwhile I squeezed more lemon juice on a broiled trout which tasted faintly of the chopped liver which had reared it to maturity at the State Hatchery. "It's a Jock Scott—the one you're eating," remarked Mr. Bugby, his round features lighting up with pride. "I tried him first to a Silver Doctor but he wouldn't rise to it."

At that moment there was a sound as of mild thunder outside, punctured at intervals by lightning-sharp commands: "Dave! *You,* Diam'! . . . Hoosh, g'long, both on you!"

Old Ned Putney had come for the beams.

"A worm fisherman," observed Mr. Bugby with distaste. "But nothing can change those mule-headed old natives, I suppose."

He went out to give directions while I trailed along in the rear. The beams were piled near the water's edge: immense slabs a foot in diameter and twenty feet long; solid and knotty pine a century old, with the bark still on. The club had bought them when an ancient barn was torn down, for it would have been impossible to find new timbers of such impressive dimensions.

"I should think," said Mr. Bugby, echoing my own thoughts, "that you'd bring your adze *here* instead of—"

"I'm taking the timbers *there,*" said Ned testily, "because I want that I should work in peace without a raft of women around." He paused to glare pointedly. "I aim to show you the best adze job this country ever seen."

A bit mollified, Mr. Bugby still yearned to be constructive. "Those things must weigh a quarter of a ton apiece—won't you need somebody to lend you a hand?"

The old man was all of seventy-five years old, crippled by rheumatism in spite of his powerful build, but he snapped, "I brought my pry-bar along, didn't I? . . . Dave, Diam'—*hoosh, g'long!*"

The oxen surged ahead with the calm insolence of the Irresistible Force approaching the Immovable Object.

By this time I realized that I was not only a witness but an umpire to the strange clash between two schools of art. For it was no coincidence which caused Mr. Bugby to be fishing on that particular side of the pond when Ned returned for a second load of timbers. It is doubtful, in fact, if Mr. Bugby would have been fishing at all in the middle of a hot afternoon except for a purpose. The truth is that Mr. Bugby was proceeding to put a worm-fisherman in his lowly place; and any trout which might have succumbed as a result would have suffered the usual fate of the innocent bystander.

A tiny flash of crimson, as frail as hope straining against space, described an ever widening arc at the end of the tapered line until the Ibis finally settled toward the water with an artful little flutter. Whisked out almost before it was wet, it took wings again at the command of Mr. Bugby's plump hands; and this time, with minute allowance for trajectory and windage, it was wafted down within an inch of a half-submerged log some forty feet away. The afternoon was blazing, but no aesthetic trout could have failed of response to such talent—the water boiled and the tip of the rod went up.

A bald little man in his late fifties, Mr. Bugby had the air of a Buddha as he played his victim. With the same delicate touch he used in casting, he offered just enough resistance to persuade but never to manhandle a gallant foe. One did not need to be told that he had fished waters as exotic as those of Scotland and Norway when at last he netted a fifteen-inch beauty and allowed it to slide gently off the barbless hook into the bottom of the boat.

My admiration was so intense that for the moment I forgave Mr. Bugby the non-absorbent qualities of his famous paper towels. I foresaw that I would emerge from gents' washrooms the rest of my life surreptitiously using my handkerchief to finish drying my hands, but without bearing Mr. Bugby any further grudge.

Ned was speechless. His jaws worked a long while before he made the only comment left to him. He spat—and on an alder twig twelve feet away a drenched dragon fly scuttled off in alarm.

At the explosive sound Mr. Bugby glanced up as if he had just noticed spectators on shore. He smiled with bland innocence, nodded, lit a cigarette and picked up his oars for the perfect exit.

Ned eyed me with sudden and grim resolve. "How," he demanded, "would you like to go fishing with *me* tomorrow morning? Fishing, I mean, and not crocheting?"

It would have been cruelty to refuse, even though I held to the fly-fishing school of ethics. At sunrise, when I drove into the old man's front yard, the first thing I saw was a large tin can with a flaming red label—obviously a can of worms shouting its defiance to the world. Beside it on the door step was a short bamboo pole with a cotton line.

But Ned was nowhere in sight and I found him in one of the woodsheds which trailed out behind the house toward a barn bringing up the rear like a caboose. Chips were flying as the old man swung his adze, and an extinguished lantern hinted that the work had been going on since earliest dawn. The hoe-like tool, whetted to razor sharpness, rose and fell in easy rhythm; now gouging out a chunk which landed with a *thwack*, now taking off a sliver so thin that it floated to the floor. "By Godfrey!" grumbled Ned. "If they think I can't—"

"Oh, no!" I hurried to reassure him, suspecting that I had gone too far in my well-meant challenge. "Why, the Committee on Remodeling even sent me over with a little present for you. It's imported Irish rye—"

The cantankerous old fellow uncorked the bottle and sniffed. "Guess I'll take it over to Grandma Binns for cough syrup," he remarked, unimpressed. "Come on in and we'll have a drink."

The mysteries of "Forty-Below" were cleared up by his fond description as he set out the jug on the kitchen table. This beverage was the final product of a barrel of hard cider left outdoors on a sub-zero night until all had congealed except a few gallons at the core released by means of a red-hot poker. The more icy the weather, of course, the more fiery and vehement is the product. "Freezes the meekness out of it," Ned explained, the tiny veins in his nose already brightening with anticipation.

Although his bachelor kitchen was spotless, he blew politely in my teacup to reassure me against dust before filling it to the brim. I took two sips and the reaction was instantaneous. For if wine could be said to sing within the human system, or gin to set up a sharp yelping noise, the effects of Forty-Below could only be compared to a pipe organ, with all stops out, playing *Yankee Doodle!* Great, crashing chords thundered through one's very soul and ended

in tingling notes as far away as the toes, while in response millions of hormones joined hands and began a sprightly dance around the spinal column.

"Warming, ain't it?" remarked Ned, noting with approval the tears which coursed down my face. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and refilled our cups. "We'll take some along for bait."

As we scrambled through thickets on our devious way up Hump Mountain, the old fellow wistfully told me his side of the story. It seemed that he nursed no bitterness toward fly-fishing. On the contrary he admitted with tart justice that it was an art which might take several years in the learning.

What he objected to was not the fly-fishing itself but the vulgar class of people it had attracted to a sport once remarkable for exclusiveness.

Indeed it had been a rare distinction in Ned's day to be recognized as one of the died-in-the-wool fishermen of a community. Only a very few loafers, drunkards or wife-beaters had any chance to qualify in the long run, since fishing at its best permitted no outside interests. Work of any sort, physical or mental, was especially apt to blunt the keen faculties required for perfection; and nothing must be allowed to interrupt the persevering apprenticeship of decades.

Thus it was that a finished worm-fisherman of the Golden Age seldom arrived in less than half a century to that intuition and generalship which, more than mere mechanical skill, constituted the glory of an authentic master.

Ned only claimed to be a likely journeyman himself, having devoted so much time to the adze, but he had known giants in his day. In contrast the crass intrusion of a paper-towel manufacturer was shocking and inconsistent, for how could one pretend to be a genuine fisherman while still bowing to the half-gods of respectability! Such an imposter could only hope to become one of the eager amateurs who have always been shunned by the true artist; and as for women trifling with a sport which has ever been their deadliest enemy, Ned found the idea too revolting for words.

After several perpendicular miles through second-growth and wild blackberry bushes I was bleeding from a dozen wounds, but a few gulps of Forty-Below served as an anesthetic. At the same time it didn't blind me to the fact that there was no brook yet to be seen.

"Seen?" growled the old man. "When you can *see* a mountain brook you know it's no good. You *listen* for real trout water and *smell* out the big ones in it, understand?"

Hugging this reprimand, I stayed in the background while he "wormed up" and spat on his hook. Dropping to his hands and knees, he edged into a thicket which completely hid the brook. Each move was painfully stealthy as he gave his worm a deft flip and eased it down through a funnel of twigs.

Before it had time to touch the water there was a splash as sudden as a gunshot and the tip of the rod jerked sidewise. Fractions of an inch became miles as the old man began to play his fish, sight unseen. Even an unguarded twitch counted in such close quarters, yet the writhing trout soon began its spiral ascent, scarcely touching a leaf as it emerged into the clear and flopped to the grass.

Ned crawled to reach the next bend. Then he reared up on one elbow as he cunningly worked his worm past twig after twig. The landing of a trout out of such a jungle constituted an engineering feat, but the old fellow made it appear easy.

I was encouraged to wet a line myself—and spent the next five minutes untangling it from the branches.

For reasons unaccountable, Ned would pass up a long stretch of brook, then take several whoppers in succession from a spot which appeared no better. Perhaps he really did "hear" and "smell" his way upstream! Finally I creeled a mere seven-incher, my only prize of the day, after rescuing it from a choke-cherry bush where the leader had become looped around a bird's nest. By this time Ned had enough trout for both of us and Grandma Binns. He tenderly covered them with ferns, after lining his basket with snow from a gorge which the sun never touched all summer.

More than a week passed before I saw him again and I could not help noting a vast change. He looked tense and preoccupied. He was about to pass me up in the village without recognition when I touched him on the shoulder and he started as if rousing from a sleep-walking dream. It was plain that the adze job had become an obsession amounting to temporary madness. I had heard of sculptors or painters going into such a frenzy while in the throes of creation, and I felt guilty for my part in inciting it.

The neighbors had become curious after remarking a lantern gleam in Ned's woodshed until late hours of the night. They guessed

that something extraordinary must be forthcoming, especially since the old man would allow nobody a preview of his handiwork. The ancients of the community began to discuss great adze jobs of the past, and it was agreed that Uncle Johnny Caldwell was best qualified as final critic.

Aged ninety-six, he had made a study of the adze since and including President Polk's administration; and though he was practically on his deathbed from a recent "stroke," he got up as if by a miracle and put on his clothes. The last genuine masterpiece Uncle Johnny had seen was exhibited in 1859, but the artist had been killed at the Battle of Fredericksburg, and no other local talent had ever risen to the same heights.

The atmosphere of tense expectation communicated itself to the Parmachene Club, where the lounge-room was now complete except for the rough-hewn beams. Paul Revere lanterns, old flax wheels, hooked rugs and pewter sconces had crowded out the stuffed and varnished trout which once served as adornments; and only the ceiling lacked that quaint touch of antique handcraft.

When the day finally came, a large audience was on hand as suddenly as if it had sprung from the earth. The club members grouped themselves on one side and the natives on the other, both factions staring in solemn anticipation as Ned's oxen thundered up the driveway. The day was cloudless but he had covered his beams with patchwork quilts in protection even from the June sunlight. Looking tired and haggard, he began to unfasten the wrappings while the crowd waited with the hushed air of people watching for the unveiling of a statue.

As he threw off the last quilt and stood aside with dramatic calm, I glanced first at the faces of his audience. Uncle Johnny Caldwell uttered a squeak of astonishment and his eyes protruded so far that another "stroke" seemed imminent. Mrs. Brantome, of the Committee on Remodeling, appeared equally agitated but in quite another direction—she gasped, turned pale and shuddered from the very depths of her aesthetic and antiquarian soul.

The reason was apparent when I looked at the beams. For they had been finished with such perfection that any hint of a "dimpled and hand-hewn" effect was entirely eliminated. Each one had been hollowed out into a thin shell through which the sunlight glowed with rosy splendor; and only a microscope could have detected the

adze-marks on a surface as smooth and polished as a plate-glass window.

"Goddamighty!" croaked Uncle Johnny at last; and then in an awed, quavering voice he paid the highest tribute of a century's criticism, "Why, you'd swear it'd been done by *machine*."

A Game of Jiggery-Poker

by Robert Westerby

Well, I suppose everybody suffers in one way or another with Neighbors. And even if they don't, well *we* do. And if you think neighbors are nothing, you don't know anything. Because, listen, will you?

The Neighbors who are on our left side are fine. They are called Hall, and nine months of the year they are away, and they just leave an old man and his wife in their house, and these people we hardly ever see. And the other three months the Halls are there, except for shouting when they are going away again: "Well, off again until August, or September," and pretending to be amused when my father shouts back: "Is that (H)all?" which is his idea of a really good joke that never goes stale, we don't talk to them, or they to us. But the other side of us is the Mendls. And the Mendls are what I am talking about, because with them we have a Feud. In fact old Mendl has annoyed my father for years by calling out: "What's the best word, neighbor?" every time they meet. And I have heard my father come home and stand inside the door and tear a newspaper into small pieces just standing there, and muttering: "What's the best word? what's the best word?" over and over again, and sometimes putting in words which nobody on earth could call "the best." Because my father is a man of Strong Passions, though he calls it Personality. And my mother calls it Bad Temper. But I reckon you can just take your pick of the three, and still be wrong.

And if the uncle that lives with us is a Sore Trial, the uncle that lives with the Mendls is worse. I mean, if our Uncle Will gets on your nerves by rubbing his hands together sharply and dryly every half-hour or so and saying: "Hah!" at nobody and nothing in particular. What price Uncle Mendl who, whenever he catches your eye, gives ten quick winks with his right eyelid, and says: "Yes, *sir*!" which has no significance. I mean, these winks *mean* nothing, because they are automatic and uncontrolled, a self-acting mechanism designed by Fate to kid you that Uncle Mendl is a Winker and a Gay Fellow. But he is not. He is All Wet without a real Wink in him. And if years ago it used to fascinate me, this winking, and

remind me of a camera-shutter, now it is just irritating. "Hullo," you say to him, "Good morning," and he just looks round and winks ten times and says: "Yes *sir*!" You see what I mean?

Well, twice every year, our family and the Mendl family pay a Visit. Because these Visits provide opportunities, and are part of the Feud. And for one Visit the Mendls come to our house, and for the other we go to theirs. And though I have talked this thing over with my brother a hundred times, we have never decided which is the worst, us going to Mendls, or Mendls coming to us. But either is bad, so perhaps it doesn't really matter. And anyway, these Visits have developed into highly-skilled contests, with strict, unwritten rules. And both sides try to win.

Well, this time it is our turn to go to the Mendls. And at eight o'clock in the evening my mother says: "Well, isn't it about time we were going in next door?" And my father rustles his newspaper and pretends he doesn't hear, and my brother pretends that the clock is not right. But my mother takes no notice and puts on pressure, and in five minutes we are all on the front porch next door.

Well, old Mendl opens the door and peers out on us with a silly grin on his face. Because he is always cheerful, old Mendl is, "Nothing I like better than a good laugh," he will say. "Come on and snap out of it! We're a long time dead!" And he will give you sharp slaps on the back until you feel like killing him. And he is like this most of the time, which is Bad. And the rest of the time he is telling you things, because he always knows everything and never lets you tell him anything, which is Worse.

"Well?" he says, as if he is astonished at seeing us. "Here *you* are!"

And my father goes a brick-red, because this feigned astonishment of old Mendl's is one up to Them. "Yes," he says in a strained voice. "Here *we* are." And we all file in through the doorway.

"Well, well," old Mendl says. "What's the best word, neighbor?"

And my father takes out his handkerchief and wipes his face with it. He is looking hot now, and we are all sore, and it is one up to the Mendls.

"Now mind you boys don't make a mess in the hall with your muddy shoes," my mother says, and we all look down at the floor and see it is very muddy already from the way somebody has been walking around it. And then we see Mrs. Mendl's cold eye is

on us, and we feel better, and my father almost grins. Because we have scored one now, and things are brighter.

So, feeling good, we go through into the living-room. And in the living-room is Uncle Mendl, who gets up and gives ten quick winks and says: "Yes *sir*!" which makes my father go red again, and the Mendls have chalked up another one. But when my Uncle Will who has sidled in behind us suddenly claps his hands and rubs them and says: "Hah!" in a loud voice and makes old Mendl jump, things are more even.

Sometimes I think my father and old Mendl ought to realize they have a good deal in common. I mean, my father has his brother living on him, and old Mendl has his wife's brother living on *him*. And both these brothers are No Good. My father's brother at least keeps quiet and to himself a good deal when my father is around, and he eats sort of deprecatingly and as if he isn't really eating at all but just having an odd crumb or two, or sort of chewing up a steak just to oblige. And he doesn't try to borrow money very often.

But old Mendl's brother-in-law is pretty bad. Because when he isn't taking the radio to pieces and failing to put it back again, or wrecking clocks by "adjusting them," he is taking pulls at old Mendl's whisky and getting tight and saying strange things to the maids which make them leave almost immediately. And neither of these Uncles work, or show any sign of wanting to.

But on these Visiting days each Uncle is temporarily part of the game. I mean, our Uncle Will is on our side and Uncle Mendl is on their side. And this seems to act on both the Uncles in a strange way, making them Drunk With Power.

Well, we sit down in the living-room and Mrs. Mendl hands round some coffee, which gives my mother an opportunity to bring the scores level by putting down her cup after two sips and a cough, and smiling at Mrs. Mendl and saying: "Oh well, I don't really feel like . . . er . . . coffee, anyway, my dear." And though we are appreciating the bad feeling that is risen up in an instant, Uncle Mendl jumps in and swills down his own coffee and then swills at my mother's cup saying: "Yes *sir*!" a triumph which is short-lived because the coffee is hotter than he had thought and makes him leap up holding his throat as if he is going to choke to death.

So Mrs. Mendl gives a sharp sort of a look at my mother's dress and squeaks and says: "Oh, my dear, did that clumsy bum stain your dress grabbing the coffee that way, why the . . ." and then she

stops and peers closer. And she laughs in a nasty way and says, "Oh no. I see now it's an *old* stain—how silly of me."

Well, now things are going fine, and when old Mendl suggests we have a game of cards you could start a forest fire with the sparks that are in the air. You see, it is felt on both sides in this Feud that the one that finally makes the other get really sore and start yelling and blowing his top has come off best, and it is this obstinate refusal to admit that the other fellow has made you madder than you have made him that keeps this system of Visit alive and going.

Well, they sit around a table, and there is Mr. Mendl and then my mother, and then Uncle Mendl and Mrs. Mendl and then our Uncle Will and my father. And my brother and I, and the Mendl kid, Lew, who is just a brat and of no account in this or any other story, we just stand outside the game to see what happens.

Well, at first they play poker, and my father wins a bit. So then old Uncle Mendl winks and says: "Yes *sir!* You ever play Hokey-Poker?" And my father looks suspicious and says no he hasn't. So "Yes *sir*!" Uncle Mendl says. "It's a swell game, and two play it at a time. Look," he says, and gives my father three cards and gives himself three cards.

"Well, what you got?" he says. And my father says he has three Jacks. So Uncle Mendl gives my mother three cards and then old man Mendl another three. "What you got?" he says, grinning like a looney. But my father taps him on the arm and says wasn't there something said about two playing at this game, and Uncle Mendl winks ten times and says: "Yes *sir*! But not necessarily." A remark which seems to me to mean nothing at all.

"I have two tens and a six of diamonds," my mother says.

"And I got a two of hearts, and a four and six in clubs," old Mendl says. So Uncle Mendl grins wider than ever. "Good," he says, "Now all stake a dollar, see? Just one dollar each." And everybody puts in the money and I see my old man is grinning fit to bust. So I look at his hand and find that he has three Kings, and not what he told old Uncle Mendl at all.

"All right, now show," Uncle Mendl says, although he knows what everybody has got. "Aha!" he cries out, "Otto wins!" and pushes the money across to old man Mendl who looks so surprised he almost forgets to look pleased.

Then my father speaks up. "But I got three *Kings*, not three Jacks," he says, and this makes Uncle Mendl sore. "Yes *sir*!" he

says, "And you declared wrong, and so you lose. If you had declared right you woulda won!" And my father goes red in the face, because he sees they have sort of got him there, and he can say nothing.

"Well, I'm surprised you tried to cheat, neighbor," old man Mendl says very reproachfully, and pocketing the jack. "I sure am surprised at that; yes sir."

So my father gives a forced laugh and he opens his mouth to make a dirty crack and then shuts it again. And he shuts it because he has caught the eye of my mother, who can Read Him Like a Book, as they say.

"Yes *sir*!" Uncle Mendl says, and winks ten times. "That is a swell game!"

Well, it seems our family isn't going so good until suddenly my Uncle Will wakes up to himself. And he claps his hands, rubbing them and says "Hah!" very loud. Then he picks up the cards and starts laying them down on the table one by one.

"I reckon," he says to Uncle Mendl, "I reckon you know *all* the card games, huh?"

"Yes *sir*!" Uncle M. booms out. There's no card game *I* don't know—or me and Otto between us," he adds, trying to make his already good standing with his brother-in-law even better.

"Sure, you said it," old Mendl says. "I know every game. Why I tell you once . . ." he starts off but Uncle Will doesn't give him a chance. "Well, I doubt it," Uncle says.

"*You* doubt it!" Uncle Mendl says all scornful. "Well you just give me *one* game I don't know. Just one little game, that's all."

"Well, *this* game," our Uncle says, still laying out the cards.

So the Mendl pair cock an eye at the cards, and Uncle Mendl gives his winks. "Sure," he says, "I know it's . . . er . . ."

"Sure," old Mendl says, "it's . . .er . . ."

"It's called Jiggery-poker," our Uncle says. "Quite correct."

"Sure," old man Mendl says, very pleased with himself for having got out of a tight corner, "sure, that's it."

Then my mother, who is craftier than her very placid face would make you think possible, puts out two dollars. "Oh, this is my favorite game," she says, "I'm surprised you don't know it, Mr. Mendl."

"But I *do*," old Mendl says, I *do*, Madam. I just said so,

didn't I?" and he puts out two dollars also, and then my father and Mrs. Mendl put out their money as well.

"All stakes in the middle of the table," my father says, with a nasty look in his eye. And then Uncle Will tells old man Mendl that as he's bank, that old Mendl is bank, I mean, he has to put in double, which he does very quickly. "I know, I know," he says. "You don't have to tell me what to do." And he doesn't even ask why he is bank, anyway, because he is that sort of man, as I said. The sort of man you can't tell anything to at any time.

Then our Uncle says "Hah!" and gives them all two cards each, and lastily he turns up two for father, a three and a seven. "Good, a three and a seven," my father says quickly, "And I win." And he scoops up the dough and shoves it into his pocket, still with a nasty look in the eye.

"Hey, but wait a minute," old Mendl says. "I don't get this."

"I thought you said you knew the game," Uncle Will says.

"Well, I do. Sure I do. But look . . ." old Mendl says, sweating and looking mad.

"Well, maybe, you don't know this *version* of it," my mother says, with a shot of genius. "This is *Canadian* Jiggery-poker."

"Oh," old Mendl says, breathing hard. "I was forgetting for a moment. Sure. Sure. We'll try it again, eh?"

So they all put up another stake, and all draw cards. And this time, by some unholy fluke, old Mendl turns up a three and a seven, the same as my father had in the last hand.

"Well!" old Mendl says, "This is lucky, neighbor, eh?"

But our Uncle Will is equal to that all right. "Oh no sir," he says, sort of mournful. "That's not lucky. That's not lucky at all. If you ain't bank—fine. But if you're bank it's no good. Not bank —7 times 3, 21. Bank—7 minus 3, 4. No good." he turns quickly to Uncle Mendl. "*You* know the game friend," he says, "That's right, ain't it?" And this has Uncle Mendl properly, and he can do nothing, except wink ten times and say, "Yes *sir*!"

"Well," my father says, "I got an eight and a six, so I guess it's me again, because it's ace low," he adds to Mrs. Mendl before she can speak or even open her mouth to say what she has got. And in a stunned silence my father picks up the dough on the table for the second time.

So the Mendls just blink and don't seem to be able to say anything. And my Uncle Will looks Uncle Mendl in the eye and says

very deliberately: "Hah! Yes *sir*," and he rubs his hands together.

And, as Uncle Mendl starts, my father leans over and slaps old man Mendl hard on the back and laughs. Then he says: "Well, neighbor, what's the Best Word?"

And I can tell from the look in my father's face this is probably one of the best moments in his life, as he sits there grinning at old Mendl who knows everything.

"Well, neighbor," he says, "What's the Best word? Yes, *sir*!"

The Melee of the Mages

by Paul Gallico

So now I'm writing a story. What can happen to me? All right, so I don't got much education from getting tossed out of grade 8A of P. S. 191 which is just a couple of blocks east of Delancey Street where I was born, for clipping that big, dumb Jake Rosenzweig, so he goes to a hospital.

Maybe if I don't take that poke at Jake ten years ago for giving me the business, when the teacher ain't looking, I go a lot further, though I guess I ain't done so bad, have I? Ask any sporting writer about Goldie. Who is writing all the press releases for Hymie Korngold's stable of Fighters that Fight, so they go in the papers sometimes with only a couple of words changed? Who takes care of the sportswriters around the training camps when we got a boy working out, and runs errands for them? Who is even allowed by Hymie Korngold sometimes I should handle a boy for him out of town when we got a fight that ain't too important? Little Irving Goldstein. But everybody calls me just Goldie.

So I guess I ain't sorry I put the slug on that big Rosenzweig, he should gradually waste away from a fatal sickness, for what the lug done to me and them other kids, the bully. A supply of small buckshot he used to keep in his cheek, and then "zip!" he'd snap one out with his teeth and sting you in the ear or the back of the neck. So one day I let him have it. There shouldn't a been no trouble only I busted his jawr and made him swallow some of the buckshot, it couldn't happen to him better. But he goes to the hospital and they give me the heave-o out of P. S. 191 and I hadda go to work.

But education ain't everything, especially when you got natural ability like I have which comes by me naturally, and Joe Parkhurst who is the sports columnist for the *Morning Democrat* says it's even better if you are going to write stories you don't have too much education or the editors will not know what you are trying to say.

Joe shows me a check for one hundred bucks he got one day for writing a story for a magazine out of his head, so I says—

"Boy, what a racket. How long has this been going on? I'll bet I could write a story. Gimme the angle will ya, Joe?"

So Joe says—"Sure, Goldie. It's a cinch. All you do is sit down at a typewriter with a lotta paper and just tell what happens to somebody."

I says—"And they give ya dough for that?"

Joe just flashes the pay paper again. You gotta admit it's a convincer, ain't it?

So that's why I'm writing now the story of how we come to win the middleweight championship of the world with Packy McSween at the Yankee Stadium last June from Joe Falone, the champion and holder of the world crown, before eighty-nine thousand people in what the sportswriters called *The Melee of the Mages*, also the *Combat of the Conjurors* and the *War of the Wizards*.

Maybe if you was there you are saying to yourself, what is the story in that, because after the hocus-pocus between Hex-Eye Lipschitz and Professor Swammi the Wabadaba of Waaf is over, all you see was Packy slide out from our corner and park his right alongside Falone's kisser after which the call for the stiff-wagon is in order.

Chum, I'm telling you that that part of it was just wrapping up the package and delivering it C.O.D. What I got is the stuff that goes inside the bundle before we hand it to Joe Falone, the inside dope that don't get into the papers on account of what Hymie Korngold calls it secrets of the trade.

It begins maybe six months ago when Hymie Korngold gets a mad with Hex-Eye Lipschitz who has been working for us regular, and tosses him out of the office over the matter of a couple of bucks. Maybe it is a foolish thing to do, but Hymie is very fond of a buck as everybody knows and if a guy is not entitled to be peculiar about something, what is it worth?

Also since we make the surprise win with Packy McSween over K. O. Hogan in the Garden in three rounds last winter with Hex-Eye putting the double whammy on Hogan, so it gradually comes a weakness over him and he doesn't duck Packy's right, Lipschitz —he should getting in both knees eventually enough water to floating the Queen Mary—is becoming so swelled up he is not only raising his prices double but he is also demanding a piece of the fighter which is something Hymie will part with his right leg sooner than.

I guess you read about Hex-Eye Lipschitz who is a curious character around the fight racket who has the wonderful gift endowed by nature to put the hex on a fighter so he loses, just by sitting in the opposite corner and giving him the eye. He is a little Yiddle, who you would not notice in a crowd except he's got bug eyes with a very funny look in them sort of creepy-like, and when he gives them to you good, you feel like one good slap on the elbow would knock you out for a week.

Hymie picked him up in Detroit where he was making cakes and coffee putting the zing on prelim boys for two slugs apiece, brought him to New York and put him on the big time working for our stable, and I gotta hand it to him, he done pretty good, because we don't lose a fight since he joined up.

He got a regular price scale of twenty-five bucks for the left eye only where the fight ain't so important or you feel pretty sure your boy he win anyway, fifty bucks for the right eye only which is a lot more powerful and is good for a semi-windup, and one hundred smackers cash for the double whammy, which is both eyes full strength, where you are in the main event and gotta win.

So right after we stiffen Hogan, Hex-Eye is around saying that he is underpaid for his services and that he will take ten per cent of Packy McSween from now on, along with double price since nobody expects Hogan will be knocked out and he alone is responsible for this glorious victory.

Naturally Hymie is sore and says Hex-Eye should gradually die first, and he is nothing but a banjo-eyed faker what he picked up when he was starving in Detroit and made him a national character in the newspapers and that the whole thing was only a lot of cykology anyway, and that he would expose him and would he now get the Hell out of the office. So Hex-Eye Lipschitz quick gives Hymie both eyes, making Hymie duck, and then takes the air. An itching should it be by him in the nose all day long but he shouldn't be able to sneeze yet.

But I am thinking that is maybe a very wrong thing Hymie says to a guy with as powerful an eye as Lipschitz, and I am wishing maybe he has not done it, because we are going very good with the stable and especially Packy McSween. I guess maybe Hymie figures he has done wrong too, for he cools off the next day and sends around word to Hex-Eye that he was only kidding and he will pay him more money but he should forget about a piece

of Packy because Packy is already cut up like a jig-saw puzzle and there are not enough pieces left to go round.

We wait three days and nothing happens and I am getting very nervous when Hex-Eye sends word back what Hymie should do with his money because he has insulted him and that from now on he will have no part of him any more and besides which he has signed up with Big Augie Schonblum's stable which is the manager of Joe Falone, the middleweight titleholder of the world, and when he meets up with any of Hymie's fighters in the opposite corner, he will not only give them the double whammy with both eyes, but also the lip which he has been working on with some good klulases, which is Jewish curses, for good measure.

Well, that is bad, but not so bad, because we don't fight many of Big Augie's boys on account of him and Hymie don't get along very well together, and we figure we are at least a year away with Packy for a shot at the middleweight crown of the world.

But that just goes to show how things happen in the fight racket and that you can't never tell. Angelo Da Spoldi, who is next in line for the summer crack at Joe Louis, goes and breaks his arm falling off one of them electric horses in Steeplechase Park and Mike Jacobs is out at the big ball park match.

He gotta have something to throw in there, so Uncle Mike gets busy and promises Big Augie the Mint, ten shares of U. S. Steel and a piece of the Empire State Building if he will sign for Joe Falone to defend his middleweight title of the world in the Yankee Stadium against Packy McSween.

Big Augie signs, and we're in. We get the crack at the middleweight championship crown of the world, one of the prized bubbles of Fistiana. It is true, there is a side arrangement where Big Augie will wind up with practically all the dough with Packy in there just for the healthful exercise in the open air, but nothing worse should happen to us then we get a chance to lift that title a year sooner.

So trouble starts. Right away we find out why big Augie is so eager to put the John Patrick Henry on the dotted line. He figures he got the difference. We are so excited about getting the match we forget all about Hex-Eye Lipschitz. He should slowly become so crippled in the spine he can't even sitting in a wheel chair yet.

The night of the afternoon we sign up the match for the pho-

togafers, he calls Packy up on the telephone at his home and says —"Listen, Irisher, you tell that cheap goniff of a manager of yours that there ain't no use of your even going in the ring against Joe Falone, because I will be sitting in his corner and I am putting on you the left, the right, and the double whammy and you will be stiffen so quick the customers don't even get a chance to take off their coats and sit down," and he hangs up.

So Packy is around the office the next day, all broke up and doesn't want to go through with the fight because he says he knows that Lipschitz will put the zing on him and he seen how it worked on K. O. Hogan.

This Packy is not like the rest of them bums, he is a good kid, when you get to know him, but being a Irisher boy he is terrible sensitive and superstitious about the Evil Eye and hexes. He is a clean living boy that come outa the Golden Gloves with a good left and a short right that reminded you of the one Jack Delaney used to throw.

Hymie developed him good and brought him along easy, and we are no worse than even to lift the world diadem from the brow of Falone, if Packy will just forget about Hex-Eye and go in there and spear with his left until he can find a spot to drop the payoff with the right.

So Hymie has to go to work on him and says—"Aw, now Packy, that's all a lot of hooey. Anyway, Hex-Eye is a Jewisher and it's a Jewisher curse so it don't do no good against Irishers."

"O yeah?" says Packy. "That looked more like a Harp to me than a Star of David on Hogan's bathrobe. He was a Mick, but he dropped his hands when Hex-Eye put the $100 whammy on him and gimme a clip at his jaw."

Well, Hymie I guess had forgotten that.

Miss Mitnick who is Hymie's seccatery and a cute trick that I could go for myself, with big brown eyes, lets out a sigh, and says—"Oh, Packy, I'm just knowing you can beat Mr. Falone. He got nothing that you haven't got."

By which I am having an idea that maybe Miss Mitnick is a little sweet on Packy, for which I don't blame her for like I said, he is a nice clean-looking kid with red hair. But Packy just groans and says—

"Oh yeah? He's got Hex-Eye Lipschitz."

So finally Hymie has to tell me to go out and square it with Hex-Eye.

I beat it up Broadway a couple of blocks and go over to outside the Garden where I hang around until pretty soon Hex-Eye comes along alone and I grab him and get a finger in his buttonhole.

"It's O. K., Hex-Eye," I says, "Hymie says you're to come back to work for him. And to show you there's no hard feelings he's giving you five percent of Packy McSween after we win the world's title. Now what do ya say?"

What do I get? I get a look outa them awful bug-eyes so it's coming in my legs a weakness already.

"Amscray, bum," he says. "You go back and tell Hymie Korngold I wouldn't have no fifty per cent of what's gonna be with Packy McSween after I and Joe Falone get through with him. I wouldn't take no hundred and fifty per cent. He called me a banjo-eyed faker, me what is responsible for his success. You tell Hymie next time I am seeing him I am putting a klula on him, down a open manhole he should fall and break both ankles. And anyway, I am sign up with Big Augie, and am very busy. I am putting the whammy on a big dinge we are fighting in Philadelphia tonight and I must go home and practice before the mirror until it is time to take the train."

I give him a good klula when we walked away. His teeth should all gradually fall out down his throat so he should choke to death yet. But it don't look so good for our side, what I have to go back and tell Hymie, does it?

So there we are, and time goes by like it does and all of a sudden it is only three days away from when we are packing up to go to Madam Bey's camp at Summit, N. J. for six weeks of outdoor training so we can get a little steam-up for the fight in the papers which is not going so good right then because all the boys were kind of set for the Da Spoldi-Louis match, and we are very low in our minds.

Packy has not been working out good in the gym at all, and Hex-Eye has announced in the newspapers that he is going along to Gus Wilson's camp at Orangeburg, N. J. where Joe Falone, the champion of the world, will train for his title defense and Hex-Eye said that he will also go into training and work out both eyes every day so that they will be extra-special sharp and full of the old

zing when it comes time to slapping the whammy on Packy McSween.

Hymie is sitting at his desk, all slumped down with his hands in his pockets shaking his head and moaning—"We gotta do something, we gotta do something. That kid he lose the fight already. A flyweight near tipped him over in the gym today. We gotta do something against Hex-Eye."

All of a sudden he looks up at the ceiling like he was going to bust with a sneeze. Then he starts chewing on his lips and bangs the desk with his fist and yells—"I got it, Goldie! I got it! Gimme that phone."

He grabs the phone by the neck and gives the number in Yiddish first he is so excited, and while he is waiting for it he says to me—

"Goldie, beat it over to the Garden and round up them boxing writers. Tell 'em to be down here at five o'clock this afternoon. Tell 'em I'm gonna have a statement of the utmost importance for them. That always gets 'em. See if ya can get some of those columnists too, anybody that's around there."

So I go over to the Garden and dig 'em up like he says.

I am back in the office at five o'clock with all of the sports writers and columnists I can round up which all are very curious about what kind of an important statement Hymie is giving out but I can't tell 'em nothing because I don't know nothing what is in Hymie's mind.

I gotta hand it to Hymie, it was good. He keeps us waiting in the outside room about five minutes. Then he throws open the door and says with plenty of the old schmaltz in his voice—"O. K., boys, you can come."

And when we go in, what's standing there? Such a thing shouldn't happen in a nightmare.

It's a tall guy, over six feet with a big black beard so long he shouldn't ever have to wear a necktie. He is wearing a black cloak like a Rabbi only on his head he got a white turband wound around like them pictures of snake charmers. Also he got a mustache like a Turk wrassler from Jake Pfeffer's stable. He stand there grinning with white teeth like a horse.

"Boys," says Hymie—"I'm introducing to you Professor Swammi, the Wabadaba of Waaf, from India. That's in Asia." Then he turns to the guy and says—"Go ahead, Professor, give it to 'em just like you give it to me."

So the Professor gives a bow and touches two fingers to his noggin and then his beard and says like this in a deep voice like in *Schule*—

"I am introducing myself, I am Abadullah Swammi, Great Wabadaba of Waaf, Seer and Prophet of Tetragramatan, delver into the eighth, ninth and thirteenth mysteries of Asch Mezareph and Sepher Jetzirah, Seeker after the Golden Egg of Bramah, Interpreter of the Nuctemeron, the Zahun and the Mizkun. I read the past in the crystal ball, the present in the Sacred Mirror of Cahor, and the future in the Secret Scrolls of the Seven Butatars of Pharzuph, for one dollar. I am the Alph, the Eph, the Zizuph and the Toglas . . ."

I hear one of the boys in the back row make the crack—

"Not to mention the Phonus and the Balonus!"

But Hymie he don't hear anything he is so excited, although I gotta say it sounds more like out of the Talmud than from Indians, but Hymie just slaps his side and says—"Ain't it a spiel, boys, ain't it? Has he got it? I'm asking you?"

Joe Parkhurst says—"He sure is a pip, Hymie. Whadaya gonna do with him?"

"What am I gonna do with him? That's what I'm telling you. He's a genuine Indian magic. He is joining up with the camp of Packy McSween challenger of the middleweight crown of the world when we are going to Madam Bey's. He is the reply of Hymie Korngold Ink. to that cheap, low-life faker Hex-Eye Lipschitz who is giving out statements already from the camp of Joe Falone, about what he should do when Packy gets in the ring. One look from them lamps of the Professor and Hex-Eye should drop dead."

"You mean he's going away to camp with you?" says Parkhurst.

"Absolutely and positively! He's in strict training like Packy. He's got to exercising his eye again because he ain't used it since the last time in the desert in India when he gives it to a wild helephant so he's gradually falling down from convulsions."

The same guy who makes the other cracks says—"Who, the helephant or the Professor?" but nobody pays him no attention, because them guys know a terrific story when they see it, and after they ask a couple more questions they all beat it away to get it into the paper and the Professor goes home to pack for Madam Bey's.

Hymie says to me—"Ain't he terrific, Goldie? But terrific? He got a studio in the Bronx. Everybody in high society on the Grand

Concourse goes to him. It comes to me like a flash. My sister is telling me about him. Two weeks ago he is saying to her she is going on a trip. And now unexpectedly already she is packing to go up to Grossinger's in the Catskills on the invitation of Yella Weintraub. Like a flash it comes to me we get the Professor. So he joins the camp for five C's if we win the title, three C's if something happens."

I gotta admit the Professor has a terrific make-up, but I'm not going so good for the Professor yet, why I do not know, so I say—"Can he give the eye?"

"Can he give the eye?" Hymie yells. "You're asking me can he give the eye? How the Hell do I know can he give the eye? He looks like it, don't he? He says he can. We gotta do something, don't we? So all right, we take him to camp with us. When them photographs come out of the Professor in his turband, that Lipschitz should bust from jealousy."

Well, I'm telling you it's wonderful. Do we get publicity? Two hours each morning I gotta spend just pasting up clippings in Hymie's press book.

What looks like starting off may be a crowd of twenty-five thousand with a eighty grand gate, is selling already so many tickets, Mike Jacobs got to increase the ringside seats and print more.

We got one gang of writers in our camp covering Packy's workout and another bunch that do nothing but just cover Professor Swammi when he trains in the ring, putting the eye, after Packy is finished working out. And it's the same over in Joe Falone's camp where Hex-Eye is training first one eye, then the other and then both and issuing statements what he will do to Professor Swammi and Packy McSween.

You can't read nothing else in the newspapers except about what they call the "Combat of the Conjurors," the "Battle of the Enchanted Optics," and the "Tournament of the Thaumaturgs."

We are up and down with Packy, who works out good one day and lousy the next according to what the reports are coming out of Falone's camp, on Hex-Eye. Like the day the story comes out of Orangeburg that Hex-Eye puts the zing on a bottle of Grade A in the middle of the ring in front of everybody, giving it only the right eye alone and when they open it afterwards, it's buttermilk.

"Boy," Hymie says to me, "that's bad. I tried to keep the papers away from Packy, but he heard it over the radio and now he

don't feel so good no more. We gotta have Professor Swammi pull one that'll throw a scare into them. Maybe he should work out this afternoon wilting some flowers, or something."

But I says—"Leave it to me, I gotta a better idea."

So I fix it up with George Lawson, a big shine sparring partner for ten bucks extra he should get bewitched, but good. So while him and Packy are working a fast round, Professor Swammi climbs up the side of the ring, mumbling something and giving George both eyes. I gotta hand it to him, the dinge earns his ten. Right in the middle he drops his hands and starts to moan—

"O Lawdy, Lawdy, de eye is on me. I feels the strenth a-oozin from mah bones."

So of course Packy stiffens him with the right, and we get a lot of fine publicity in the papers and Packy Starts to work good again until we get word the next day that Big Augie has got Clyde Beatty to bring a trick lion over from the circus for Hex-Eye to practice putting the whammy on, and now the circus is going to sue Big Augie because the same night the lion got sick of the stomach and died in great agony.

A couple of days later Joe Parkhurst comes out with a big column in the *Morning Democrat* which is an exclusive interview with Hex-Eye Lipschitz himself in which he says—

"Who did this so-called Professor Swammi ever Hex? What's his record? Let him go out and get a reputation before he tries to climb in the same ring with a man who has put the whammy on some of the best boys in fistendom. I say let him name one guy he has give the eye to. What goes on?"

And then comes in the interview a long list of all the boys Hex-Eye has put the peepers to so that they are either knock out or lose the dezision, ending up with K. O. Hogan.

Well, Packy is pretty sick again when he reads that one, and Hymie has to think fast so he says maybe it is a good idea if we give the Prof. an out-of-town tryout to see if we can't build him up a little before we throw him into the ring against Hex-Eye in the main event.

We have a good lightweight, Sammy Levin, going in Scranton in a special eight against Rocky Bazone, a couple of nights later and Hymie who is too busy to leave, sends me with the kid to handle him and tells me to bring the Professor along he should take a workout on Rocky who is all washed up and can't punch any

more so Sammy is a sure thing to win, otherwise why should we be in there fighting him?

That ain't a trip I'm gonna forget. First they musta had a plage of gnats down there in Scranton because I never got stung so many times in my life, I am busy all the time slapping at them. And second is, the Professor he don't go so good.

It is a sell-out house because word has been printed that the Professor will be there, and so we are in our corners after the introductions, waiting for the bell with me telling Sammy how to use his left, and the Professor wearing his white turband is hanging over the ropes in the corner with me.

So the bell rings and the Professor fixes his lamps on Rocky who is coming out of his corner winding up his right, and says—"Mene! Mene Tekel Upharsin!" which Sammy thinks I am giving him some last minute instructions in Yiddish so he turns his head and asks—"*Vos hoste gezugt Goldie?*"

So he is not looking at all when Rocky comes over and parks that right square on his potato, and Sammy is out like a light.

Well, I am telling you that if the knockdown timekeeper is not a personal friend of Hymie's and does not give Sammy one of those —"One—one and a half, two—two and three quarters," counts for about eighteen seconds, he will never get up except I have the presents of mind to kick over the water bucket right where Sammy is laying so it goes over his head and he makes it, otherwise the timekeeper is going to have to say, "Nineteen, twenty, you're out!" no matter how good friends he is with Hymie.

It takes Sammy four rounds to know what town he's in, but he comes around and we get the nod, but just. It's a good thing Hymie got friends among them judges too. And all the way home on the train them gnats is with us.

Well, it's all right, and Hymie give out the story how Sammy Levin is foully butted by Rocky Bazone, but that the power of the Professor's eye holds off Rocky until Sammy can come back and dezision him.

But I am beginning to be a little uneasy by this time and am wishing that Big Augie has the Professor and we have Hex-Eye Lipschitz, when it comes up the fight. I will like it better.

So it's coming on close to the big show, and nobody don't write no more whether Packy McSween is sweating good, and works four fast rounds with his spar mates, or whether Joe Falone's lightning

left is as fast as it was two years ago. All that's in the papers is what Hex-Eye will do to the Prof. when he gets him in the ring and how Professor Swammi will put the Egyptian Blast on Hex-Eye before Hex-Eye he even gets one look at Packy.

The *Morning Scimitar* comes out with the life story of Hex-Eye Lipschitz, and puts on a hundred thousand circulation, so Hymie counters right away with a series of signed articles by Professor Swammi in the *Morning Democrat* which is spooked by Joe Parkhurst. A couple of guys in Tin Pan Alley even write a song—*With the Swammi on that Swannee River Shore.* I'm telling you the build-up is terrific.

So it's coming closer all the time to the fight. Hex-Eye goes on *We, The People* on the radio in which he says with his left eye alone he will not only put the snore on the Swammi but he will cripple all his relatives too.

Hymie comes right back and gets the Professor on *Information Please,* where he turns out an awful dope what don't know any of the answers to the questions, but Hymie explains quick to the press that that is because on account of the radio he cannot use the power of his eyes which is what he is going to give to Hex-Eye and Joe Falone the night of the fight so it will be coming to them both the St. Vitus dance for a month.

It is fix up with the Commission that both Hex-Eye and the Professor are issued seconds' licenses so they can walk to the center of the ring with the two boys, because that is where the big event is going to take place where they will go to work with their whammies and try to put it on each other and the two fighters, just before they ring the bell.

Hymie and Big Augie reach an agreement in Mike Jacobs' office that neither Hex-Eye nor Professor Swammi are to show up at the weighing-in, because Uncle Mike points out that when 79,000 people have bought tickets, with the unreserved sections still to go, they are entitled to a gander at the big doings, or as one sportswriter called it the Duel of the Demons.

So finally comes the day of the fight which is scheduled for ten o'clock at night in the Yankee Stadium, and you couldn't buy a ticket for it no matter who you knew. Everybody is going to be there to see what happens when the famous Hex-Eye Lipschitz meets Professor Abadulla Swammi, the Wabadaba of Waaf, face to face. The whole Bronx has a special section to cheer on the Pro-

fessor while the Lower East Side and the Grand Street Boys have bought two thousand seats together to yell for Hex-Eye.

And I am feeling not so good. That afternoon, I am up in our office which is closed, to get a block of tickets Hymie left in his desk. No one is supposed to be there so when I hear a sort of funny sound from the inside office, I am surprised. I go in, and there is Miss Mitnick, and she has her head down on her arms over her typewriter and is crying. She ain't a very big dame, and she got them soft dark eyes that look even better when they're leaking.

So I says—"Well, well, sister. Something wrong? What's eating ya?"

She looks up at me so I feel I'm gonna melt and says—"O Goldie, Goldie, I'm so unhappy. I'm so afraid Packy isn't going to win and will be hurt. I saw Packy last night. He thinks he's going to lose. He doesn't believe in the Professor, and I don't either. A friend wrote to him from Scranton that the Professor was a big flop as a hexer and Levin would have been knocked out except they gave him a Chicago count. So now Packy is sure that Lipchitz will put the eye on him and he will be knocked out too. O Goldie! Can the Professor do anything?"

"Sister," I said—"I'll betcha the Professor couldn't put a cat to sleep if he had a can of chloroform in both hands. That Hex-Eye's got the goods, because I seen it work on Hogan. It looks bad, don't it? A congestion should slowly come to both his lungs and it shouldn't be handy an oxygen tent."

Miss Mitnick puts her head down and is sobbing harder, so I'm putting my arm around and saying—"Don't cry so, sister. Maybe Packy's gonna win yet because he's got a good punch. You're pretty sweet on him, ain'tcha?"

She says—"Y-yes, Goldie, I am. He loves me too. He said so."

"Ya known him long?"

"Y-yes," she says. "We were sweethearts when we went to public school together on the Lower East Side, but we had a quarrel and I didn't see him again until I came to work for Hymie. It's all made up now, and now he isn't going to win and will get hurt . . ."

It come to me like a lightning!

I'm telling you, I should live so, it comes on me just like a lightning out of the sky. I musta hit poor Miss Mitnick an awful clout on the back I got so excited because she jumped up with a scream, but I said—

"Sister, I got it. I'm tellin' ya I got it. You just leave it to Little Goldie. We're gonna see who puts what whammy on who. An Packy's gonna be the new champion of the world. G'bye now, and don't you worry no more."

I beat it over to the Hotel Edison where we had our headquarters. But fast. They were all back from the weighing-in and sitting around the room looking sick, Packy, and Hymie, and Doc who works in the corner with Hymie.

I says to Hymie—"Where's the Professor?"

Hymie answers—"He's in his room. He don't feel so good, he says. Maybe he wants to take a run-out powder."

"He's gonna feel worse before he feels better." The next minute I'm in his room. He ain't got his turband on and is sitting on the sofa looking sort of green because he is scared to death of meeting Hex-Eye Lipschitz and he got a just-opened bottle of whiskey on the table and a glass, which I knock onto the floor.

"Professor Swammi," I says—"You and me are going to have a little talk."

So we have a little talk.

So now I'm gonna tell ya about the fight because maybe you ain't a ex-bootlegger, or night-club owner, or gangster or a actor or a politician, in which case you wasn't sitting close up enough to that ring to really see what happened.

Boy, if I'm living to be a hundred I ain't never gonna forget the noise that crowd makes when me and Packy and Hymie and Doc and the Professor come down the aisle to go into the corner. Wow!

The Professor has on a new white turband with a silver star sticking up in the front of it and a new cloak that Hymie got made up at Brooks Brothers Costumers for him with silver stars and moons on it. Did we get a hand with everybody yelling—"Atta-boy, Swammi old boy! Stick it on him! We're with you!"

Then Joe Falone, the middleweight world's championship title-holder comes in with his gang with Hex-Eye Lipschitz wearing a dress suit they rented for him somewhere over on Second Avenue, with a red band across his shirt front like a diplomat, puffed up like a politician and wearing a pair of blue goggles over his eyes so as not to strain them until he is ready to let go the big whammy, and the crowd goes wild.

"Come on, Hex-Eye," they yell—"Show up that big phony! Make him like it!"

Harry Balogh was using the loudspeaker for the interductions, but you couldn't even hear them with those because of the noise the crowd is making. It seemed like the whole city is split up over who is going to win between Hex-Eye and the Professor.

So the moment comes at last when the referee calls the two boys to the center of the ring. I am crouched down at the ringside in our corner, and don't think I wasn't sweating. I am so excited I can't even think of a good klula to say at Hex-Eye.

There they are in the center of the ring, Joe Falone and Packy shaking hands and I can see Packy's knees shivering, and Big Augie and Hymie and Hex-Eye Lipschitz and Professor Abadullah Swammi, the Wabadaba of Waaf.

Everybody in the park is standing on their feet, screaming and yelling—"Give it to him, Hex-Eye! Let him have it Swammi! Both eyes, Hex-Eye! Put the Indian sign on him, Swammi! He'll lay down, Swammi! Show him up for a phony, Hex-Eye!"

So while the instructions are going on, the Professor is just standing there quietly grinning at Hex-Eye and showing his teeth, and they sure were nice, white strong teeth, and I can see that Hex-Eye is beginning to get a little nervous because the Professor is just standing there grinning at him like a dope without saying anything. So the referee finishes his instructions and there comes a sort of a lull for a second in which I hear Hex-Eye say to the Professor—

"What are you grinning at, you big *schmock?* You can starting to wipe that grin offn your big ugly face, because I'm gonna give you the eye, and I'm gonna give it to you *now*," and he puts his hand up to his glasses.

That crowd stops yelling just like one big hand had shut it off with a choke.

You coulda heard a dime drop as Hex-Eye slowly removes his glasses and sticks his puss right up close to the Professor's who is still grinning and says—"I am giving you the eye now! I am giving you BOTH eyes!"

And the next thing you know Hex-Eye is clapping his hands to his face and letting out a yell you coulda heard in Weehawken—

"Ow! Ow, my eyes! I'm blind! Help, I'm blind! I can't see!"

and starts to stagger around the ring, pawing with one hand and keeping the other over his glims.

Wow! What a yell went up from that crowd! It sounded like eight million people all screaming "Swammi! Swammi! Swammi!"

The ring is full of confusion. Packy is jigging around with a look on his face like he got a reprieve from the Governor. Big Augie doesn't know what to make of it and is trying to catch Hex-Eye to keep him from falling out of the ring. The Professor is taking bows to all four sides, putting his fingers to his bean and his whiskers and the referee is looking confused as though he does not know just what to do.

So I yell up at him—"Throw that bum out of there and start the fight," at just the right moment because it helps him make up his mind. He goes over and grabs Hex-Eye by the arm and hustles him to his corner and out through the ropes while Hymie snatches the Professor who would be in there taking bows all night otherwise and gives him the toss.

"Bong!" The timekeeper yanks the bell, and they're off.

Joe Falone comes out of his corner, and because he is a little dazed by what has happened to Hex-Eye he don't carry his left hand as high as he ought, and BLOWIE! Packy is in there and drops the sweetheart right smack on Joe's chinaware, and the referee he don't even bother enough to count!

We got the new middleweight champion titleholder of the world's crown.

Joe Falone is still snoring in his corner when Hex-Eye starts yelling—"It's all right now. I can see again! Where is that Goniff so I will put the eye on him now. Show him to me!" So when he finds out that his boy has been chilled so he will not be up in time maybe to see next Sunday's funny papers, he is around the ringside yelling—"We was robbed! I got shot! I want another chance!"

But everybody is just giving him the horse laugh, and Hymie is in the ring, hugging and kissing Packy and the Professor, and talking into the radio, and Miss Mitnick comes up and throws her arms around and kisses me and says—

"O Goldie, isn't it wonderful! I'm the happiest girl in the world. And you said it would be all right. But O Goldie, I'm so ashamed of the things I said about Professor Swammi. Wasn't he just too wonderful the way he stood there and put a spell on that awful Hex-Eye?"

So I don't say nothing, and soon she is in the ring with her arms around Packy and the photogafers are taking pictures and also a picture of her kissing the Professor in the middle of his whiskers.

And I am laughing, because there are 89,000 people in that park, but I am the only one that knows that Professor Abadulla Swammi ain't no professor at all, and he ain't from India either. He is Jake Rosenzweig from P. S. 191 whose jawr I busted for giving us kids the business with them little buckshot out of his teeth.

If I wasn't so dumb I should of known him right away except it is ten years since I see him and then he is hiding behind all that spinach he grows to play the part of Professor Swammi so he can tell fortunes to the suckers in the Bronx.

And if I got any brains I shoulda known it wasn't gnats that night in Scranton but that big bum still giving me the business with them buckshot. It don't come back to me until I am talking with Miss Mitnick in the office the day of the fight and she says public school on the Lower East Side and a quarrel, and then all of a sudden, like I say, it comes on me like a lightning, where I seen Professor Swammi before, the lug.

So when I'm in his room the day of the fight I tell him what he should do with Hex-Eye when he meets him in the ring and he says he ain't gonna go in the ring because he is afraid of Hex-Eye, so I tell him if he takes a powder I will tell everyone he ain't no Professor Swammi but just plain Jake Rosenzweig, and he is more afraid of that than he is of Hex-Eye.

When Hex-Eye sticks his puss right up into his in the ring, Jake has a half a mouthful of buckshot ready for him and lets him have it right in the eyeballs. He never made two better shots, even in P. S. 191.

All right, is it a story, or is it? I'm asking you. If it don't thinking so the editors I am getting ready for them a good klula. It should come by them gradually a *geschwulst* on the larynx so they shouldn't be able to talking for eight months, except with the hands, where they should getting eventually a roomatism.

A Pair of Vikings

by Conrad Aiken

The first I heard of it—and heard of them—was, of course, from the irrepressible Paul. Naturally. Nothing went on, in that little English country town, that Paul didn't at once know: and nothing he knew could remain for more than five minutes a secret. He was everywhere, with that long aristocratic nose of his, that hawk-bright and frost-blue stare—whether it was to make quick notes on his little pad for a sketch, or to make a sketch itself, or to take elaborately careful photographs of some obscure "subject" which was later to become, as he put it, an "idea." You would meet him anywhere, everywhere. Perched on a stile, miles from anywhere, in the middle of the marsh, you would find him waiting to get a very special and particular light on the reeds, meanwhile writing out, in his tiny needle-sharp handwriting, any number of color charts for proposed landscapes which read like poems, like Imagist poems. Once I discovered him astride an old wreck of a steamroller, which had been abandoned by a corner of the muddy little river. And once flat on his belly in the very middle of the path to the ship-yards, taking, from that earthworm angle—angleworm?—a peculiar fore-shortened photograph of some up-ended, half-finished fence posts. In fact, he was into everything.

But people, too—he was just as excitable about people, just as curious about them, as about anything else. He was a "collector" of people, and especially the odd and queer ones, or the brilliant ones: and if his extraordinary studio was a perfect museum of odd-ments—shells, old bottles, misshapen stones, dead leaves, dead insects, broken dolls, whatever had taken his fancy, or struck him as suggestive—so his *salons* were full of the most surprising people imaginable. He didn't care where they came from or what they did, so long as they had character, or were handsome, or were amusing—those were the three tests. The social mixtures, at these semi-occasional *salons*, were simply indescribable—women with blue hair, yogis, dipsomaniac composers, circus dwarfs, countesses, mannequins, chorus girls—but it made no difference, they always seemed to have a good time, Paul saw to that; and of course Paul himself

had the best time of all. Whether he was discussing the psychological implications of surrealism with a pale Belgian poet, or giving amusingly amorous advice about her make-up to a pretty, an extremely pretty, young society photographer, it was all the same to him. He enjoyed life immensely.

It was no surprise to me, therefore, when he came under my lighted window, late one summer evening, and told me, laughing excitedly, that he had something to show me.

"What is it," I said.

"Come down and see."

When I had joined him in the cobbled street, and repeated my question, he asked one of his own—he asked if I knew that a fair had come to town. As a matter of fact, I did. Early that day I had seen the first of the brightly-striped tents and pavilions going up, and the gaudy gypsy wagons drawn up in a ring on the playing-salts, and the ditch being dug behind a canvas screen, for a latrine, and the fantastic red and gold horses of the merry-go-round emerging proudly from their dirty covers. It was the fair's annual visit to the town, for a week of penny gambling and loud music but there was nothing so remarkable in that. And I said so.

"Ah—but have you seen it all—have you seen the Drome of Death?"

"The Drome of Death?"

"Yes—and my pair of vikings!"

"Vikings! A pair of vikings! What on earth are you talking about."

"Then you *haven't* seen it all—not by any means. My dear fellow—the most beautiful pair of human beings you ever saw in your life! Come along, or we'll be too late."

We hurried along the High Street then, to the little cliff that overlooks the playing-salts, and there below us was all the glare and uproar of the fair—the crowds, the shouts, the strange squealing watery music of the merry-go-round, with its circling and nodding horses, the rows of painted swing-boats, with their tense and silent occupants clinging to the ropes as they darted up from light into shadow, and down into light again—it was all exactly as usual, exactly as it always was. Or so I was thinking, until I heard a sound that seemed to me unfamiliar. It sounded like a motor-bike being accelerated in bursts, each louder than the last—a crescendo of mechanical roars, and then a dying fall, and another

crescendo of roars, and a third; and looking down from our parapet to see if I could find where it came from, I saw the Drome of Death for the first time, and then below it, in a dazzle of spotlight, standing on a little raised dais of bright red plush, with the two motor-bicycles beside them, the vikings.

Even at that distance, I could see that Paul must be right. There was something regal in the proud and careless stance of the two blue figures. They stood there above the crowd with a sort of indolent patrician contempt: you feel the same thing in a caged lion or tiger at the zoo. And when we had descended the steep stairway, which quartered down the face of the little cliff, and had pressed through the crowds of merry-makers round the gambling booths and coconut-sky, and came to the foot of the red plush dais, it was at once evident to me that not only had Paul not exaggerated, but that he was guilty of an understatement. The boy and girl—for they seemed hardly more than that—were blindingly, angelically, beautiful. Angelically, because they were both so incredibly fair, so blond, so blue-eyed—but also because there was a fierce purity about them, something untamable, almost unchallengeable. Vikings, yes—Paul had hit the nail on the head, as usual. And the effect was further heightened—now that I looked again—by the fact that the girl, who was otherwise dressed exactly as the boy was, in a blue shirt open at the throat, and loosely fitting dark blue trousers, wore a snug little blue hat, which sat very close to her fair head, with bright silver wings at either side. The effect was really magical; for as she looked over our heads, undazzled by the brilliance of the spotlight in which she stood, it was as if she were already in swift motion, already positively flying. She was speed itself—she was an arrow. And her eyes were the bluest, and the fiercest, I have ever seen.

Meanwhile, the boy had raced the engine of his motor-bike three or four times with a shattering roar, the ticket seller announced through a little megaphone that the performance, the last of the evening, would begin, and people were climbing up the rickety stairs that led to the top of the great varnished cylinder which was called the Drome of Death. A perfect cat's cradle of wire stays tethered it to earth—I noticed that these, like the wall of the Drome itself, seemed to be brand-new—a fact which subsequently, of course, was verified. The boy and girl wheeled their motor-bikes along the run-

way to a door in the Drome, which an assistant clamped fast behind them, Paul bought the two tickets, and we hurried up the stairs.

"Do you mean to say they're going to ride *round* in this mere barrel?" I said, as we seated ourselves, and looked down into the wooden interior. Viewed from the rim, it really looked like an enormous dice-cup. The two vikings stood beside their motor-bikes, wiping their hands.

"Of course. Nothing but centrifugal force—quite simple, really, I believe—they've been doing it for years in the States—but just the same it gives you quite a thrill. And those two *people*—my God, did you ever see anything like them? *Look* at that girl! *Look* at the way she stands there! Like a flame, my boy—she's like a flame. And he's really just as fine—they're married, I think."

"Married? Those children?"

"Well, she's wearing a ring—you'll see it when she comes up here."

"Comes up here?"

"Right to the top, almost up to the top—that's why they've got this guard-wire here . . ."

The boy, his fair cool face turned upward, was saying:

"—you see how it is—the risks are thought to be too great, and therefore we are unable to obtain any insurance whatever. No life insurance company will take us—no matter what the premium. That is why I ask you to make any contribution you can, no matter how small—it simply goes into a separate fund which we keep in case of accident."

He stood there, looking up, calmly and as if appraisingly—one hand resting lightly on his hip—the girl was leaning idly, indifferently, against her motor-bike, not looking anywhere, and visibly bored—it was all quite extraordinary. A cultured voice, too, clear and firm—the accent that of a gentleman. Pennies, sixpences, a few shillings, fell spinning and rolling into the Drome—he said "thank you—thank you—" as he stooped unhurryingly, and with irreproachable dignity, to pick them up. The girl watched him, unmoving, for a second or two, and then began examining her fingernails.

She remained like that, too, exactly like that, at the center of the Drome, while he started his motor-bike, rode with increasing speed round and round the tilted floor at the bottom, and then suddenly was circling round the wall itself. The uproar was deafening.

The pent-up racket of the motor-bike would have been quite enough by itself—but in addition the Drome began to creak terrifyingly under that swift rush of pressure and weight, and you could see it actually changing in shape as the rider flashed round the gleaming walls. Higher and higher he came, spiraling always nearer, until at last he was roaring past us within arm's reach of the top, the hot gust beating against our faces and gone and then back again, his fair hair blown back like a flag. And then he was dipping downward again: and had taken his hands off the handle bars: and his arms outspread was circling as easily as a swallow. It was as beautiful, and looked just as easy, as that. It was pure flight.

I was just going to say something like this to Paul, and just thinking to myself that swallows alone, of all birds, seem to use flight for pure pleasure, when I happened to look at the girl. She had not moved. The proud face, under its silver wings, was turned slightly aside and downward, she again examined her fingernails, still leaning idly against her tilted machine, only once did she glance upward toward the moving figure above her; and then it was a glance not so much directed toward him as beyond him. Was she—as she appeared—so completely indifferent to him? Or was the whole behavior merely professional? It did not change when he dropped down, slowing, to the tilted floor, and came to a stop beside her—nor when he said something to her, in a low voice, either. Something very brief, only a word or two—he looking straight at her, she looking away—instructions, perhaps, or a word of advice. She simply continued to look away, as if through the walls, while he was announcing to us, in his polite and cultured voice, that he and his wife were the first in the world to ride two motor-bicycles simultaneously in the Drome of Death—adding, as a cautionary note, that it would be as well if the spectators would keep a little back of the guard-wire. And then, in another moment or two, the girl had mounted her machine, and was circling with greater and greater speed for her first strike on to the wall, and—flash!—she was already there, and the two bright wings were swiftly mounting toward us. It seemed to me that she had rushed the whole attack on the perpendicular wall much more rapidly than he had—or could I be mistaken? And that even now she was traveling faster. In next to no time she was whizzing round the very top, barely below the guard-wire, the beautiful viking face fixed in a sort of fierce serenity of speed, the loose blue collar blown back from

the white throat: and then, below, the other machine had suddenly shot upwards: and in an indescribable uproar which seemed to be racking the walls to pieces the two flying figures circled and recircled, one above the other—the girl keeping rigidly at one level, the boy alternately dipping and soaring. One didn't know which of them to watch—the rapt face above, or the more brilliant performance of the boy below. But now, one *had* to watch him for once more he was sailing like a bird, with his hands off the handle bars, and now too he was taking something out of his pocket—it was a square of black silk, a black handkerchief, fluttering as fiercely as if it were flame in its attempt to escape from his hands, the two hands holding it up before his face. Yes—he was actually going to blindfold himself! The black square blew over his face, over his eyes, and was held stiffly there by the sheer speed at which he was moving, and now again, his arms outspread at either side, he swooped like a swallow round the shining Drome, easily, effortlessly, while the girl above, traveling a little more slowly, for the first time seemed to be watching him . . .

But watching him with that same fierceness, still, that same air of remote and unbreakable pride—certainly without fear, either for herself or him. Almost angrily, in fact, or contemptuously; and as if impatient, too, for him to be done with it, to get it over with. You could feel her thinking—"come on, come on, we've had enough of this now, you've shown off enough, let's get down off this wall and go home"—! But all the while, too, her own steel-like delight in the speed and danger, as if that gleaming perpendicular wall, for her, was something more precious than life itself.

It was coming to an end, however. The boy had whipped off the black handkerchief, had tucked it away quickly, was circling downward and slowing, the bursts of sound from the exhaust becoming irregular and intermittent—and now he was out on the floor again, and the girl, in her turn, was spiraling beautifully down the wall, slower and slower, the silver wings pointing downward, the fierce head held proudly back. In less than a minute, without any fuss, she had joined the boy in the center of the floor, they were stacking the motor-bikes for the night, and the people beside us were getting up to leave. Down below, the curved door in the wall of the Drome had been opened from outside, and the assistant had come in, bringing a wooden mallet. The girl went out first, without saying

a word—the boy just pausing to say something to the assistant, then following. Our ten golden minutes were over.

"Well—" Paul said as we went down the narrow stairs—"was I right?"

"You were right. Words fail me. A pair of nonpareils. Why they're incredible! And how exactly like you to find them!"

He chuckled.

"Yes—it was a bit of luck."

"But tell me—why was there no applause?"

"Isn't that funny? There never *is* any. Not a scrap. You know—I fancy it's because people are really dazzled, really overcome—do you think it could be that—?"

"It may be—it may be. *I* certainly was . . . !"

Outside, the fair was closing up for the night. The merry-go-round had been darkened, lights here and there were being turned off, the last few stragglers were drifting across the littered playing-salts. Shadows moved on the curtained windows of the gypsy wagons and caravans—the fair-folk were going to bed. Beside the huge green lorry which was the power-plant, the night watchman sat in a wooden chair on the grass—he was reading a paper by the light of one naked bulb, stuck in the side of the lorry, and keeping an eye on his throbbing motors. Cables ran from the lorry across the grass to the merry-go-round, the Drome, the various wagons—we stepped over them carefully, deciding to walk home by way of the river.

The boy and girl were nowhere in sight.

II

Of course, we both saw them again, and not once but many times. How could we possibly keep away from them? We couldn't, and didn't. We became addicts, sitting through performance after performance—we took parties of friends—we went, in short, over and over again, returning willy-nilly to that delight as the drunkard returns to his bottle. Paul took along his camera, naturally, and got dozens of remarkable photographs—and how many sketches he made goodness knows. At the end, we knew those two lovely creatures absolutely by heart—as you usually know only those people you love. And all this time, right *to* the end, they both

remained just exactly as superb and beautiful and inviolable as they had seemed at the beginning.

That is, as far as the *performance* was concerned. And in fact, the effect was actually heightened by what we found out about them —it added an element of the dramatic to know what we knew, and to know *why* they behaved as they did. How much more, too, if we could have known how it was destined to end, and how soon—! But that was impossible, of course, and nobody guessed it; and meanwhile it was quite enough for us to watch day after day the girl's savage and contemptuous indifference, and the angry pride which so enhanced her beauty, and counter to this, the boy's calm and cool and patient courage, the *quiet* courage of the one who knows that he can wait longest.

A start was made when Paul decided to ask them to Sunday tea, and did so, and they accepted. They were surprised, but they were also delighted. They came, and it was a huge success, and—as Margaret told me afterwards, for I was unable to go, much to my sorrow—they behaved beautifully, simply beautifully. Somehow, nobody had quite expected them to have much in the way of manners—an assumption which was quite unfounded, of course, and which collapsed instantly and startlingly when it came out, almost at once, that the boy was the son of a north country vicar! A gentleman, in fact, and the girl a lady! Margaret was relieved; and Paul was amused; and everybody, as usual, had a good time. And lots of interesting things came out. They were both twenty-two, and had been married less than a year. The boy had spent a few months in New York—it was there that he had learned his stunt-riding, while working as a mechanic for the Wall of Death at Coney Island, or some such place. And he had decided that he would come back to England and be the first to introduce it there. With the money he came into from his mother on his twenty-first birthday, he bought the rights and plans for the first Drome of Death in England, therefore, and had it built at Southampton—and only a week before, at Southampton, he and his wife had given their first performance. All the money had been spent—it was a close thing—and they would be dependent on what they could make, but they were confident. And so on.

It was noticeable—Margaret said—that it was he who did all the talking. But a little nervously, and constantly turning to his wife, as if half afraid of some shadowy criticism or disapproval.

The girl said practically nothing. She was perfectly self-possessed, and quite amiable, but she made it evident that she preferred to listen—now and then turning towards her husband, Margaret thought, an expression that seemed perhaps just a shade skeptical. Especially of his exploits—when he was telling of his previous exploits. Not that he boasted at all—not in the least. Apparently he had in fact been extremely modest about it. But it was when he was telling of his winning the Isle of Man trophy, and the race from Land's End to John o' Groats, and a few other such things, that Margaret first noticed, as she put it, what looked almost like a curl of the lip, and an angry flash of light in the girl's eyes. It was odd, and a little disconcerting. And moreover, it seemed disconcerting to the boy.

But that was all, no further light was shed on it at the time, and it was not till a few days before the fair left town, and took the road for Folkstone, that the thing really came out.

And all through a package of cigarettes—and the fact that I had to call at the jeweler's for my watch, which I had taken to be cleaned. The jeweler's shop was at the end of the High Street, just beside the cliff, and above the playing-salts; and seeing the fair, and having nothing to do, I went down. Except for one or two of the penny gambling stalls, the fair was not officially open in the morning, and therefore now it looked a little deserted. Nobody about—only a few children. But when I came to the Drome of Death, there, sitting on the edge of the red plush dais, dangling his blue-trousered legs, was the boy, all alone, and the minute he saw me his eyes lighted up with recognition, and he smiled.

"I imagine you've seen me before," I said.

"Many times. You're a friend of Mr. Nash, aren't you? I think he spoke of you."

I admitted this, and said that I was sorry I had been unable to come to the tea, and to meet his wife and himself, and I complimented him on the show, at which he was pleased, and then he asked me if I wouldn't sit down, and I did. But it was when I offered him a cigarette that he *really* showed his pleasure—he fairly beamed at me.

"You know—" he said—"I've been frantic for a cigarette—absolutely frantic. Ran out half an hour ago, and not a soul around the place, and myself alone here, so that I couldn't leave—nothing safe, you know, with these gypsies round—thanks!"

"You smoke a lot?"

"Afraid I do. I don't know, in this sort of business you need something to do in between-times, something to steady your nerves —you know what I mean? When you aren't riding. And in the morning, especially in the morning!"

"The morning?"

"It's a long wait in the morning—we were disappointed to find this town so small, you know, it means you can't have any morning performances—bad luck, too, just when we could do with some extra cash—and it's bad in this kind of business when you haven't got anything to do. You can't drink, not in this game—so there's nothing to do but smoke. I'm a chain smoker—so's the kid."

"The kid—?"

"My wife."

"Well, I suppose that's natural. I should think it *would* get on your nerves."

"Yes. You want to keep going. On the move all the time—that's the trouble with a little third-rate fair like this, they only hit the small towns, and there isn't enough in it. . . . "

He smiled, the blue eyes looking lightly at me, and then beyond me, as if to something in the future—something quite definitely bigger and better than this third-rate fair. But then he waved his cigarette toward the merry-go-round, and added—

"But it's all right, you know, and you've got to make a beginning somewhere, haven't you? So I suppose we were lucky, at that."

There was a pause, he blew the ash off the cigarette, and then after a moment I told him how much I admired the looks of the Drome—in which Nash, who was an artist, agreed with me. He was delighted with this.

"It *is* pretty, isn't it—?" he said—"yes, it *is* pretty. A little shipyard at Southampton did the building, and they did a lovely job of it. Look at that woodwork—like a yacht, it is—everything of the finest! Much better built than the Yankee ones—much. You know, it's a tricky piece of work to do, too—there's got to be a lot of give and play in it, not too rigid—but not too slack either. Have you noticed when we go round there's a kind of ripple of the whole structure that goes with us—? Well, that has to be just right. We have to tune it up, keep it tuned, just like a fiddle. That's what the stays are for—we tighten 'em or loosen 'em—watch 'em all the time.

And it'll get better as it ages a bit—got to weather, you know, like everything else. It's already improving—gets a little more supple."

We looked up together at the varnished woodwork of the Drome, the sunlight gleaming on its smooth brown flanks, he reached out his hand and touched one of the heavy wire stays—yes, it was true, it *did* remind one of a yacht—or even, yes, of a fiddle.

"Nash has taken some very good photos of it," I said.

"Has he?"

"Of you and your wife, too."

"Oh? I'd like to see them—I'd like to see them. He's quite an artist, isn't he?"

"Very fine. One of the best."

We smoked in silence for a minute, and then, to my great surprise, he said—

"And what do you *think* of my wife?"

"Your wife—? How do you mean?"

"I mean, in the show."

"Well, of course—I think she's wonderful."

"You do, eh?"

He was frowning at me, a little anxious, a little puzzled. I was uncertain where his questions were leading, so I merely repeated—

"Oh yes, we *all* do. And of course she's remarkably beautiful—"

"Yes—she is . . . I say, would you mind if I cadged another fag—?"

I handed him the cigarettes, he lit one from the stub, and then, frowning again, he went on—

"You see, it's a problem."

"A problem?"

"Yes. This show business isn't so simple. Of course, she's good, I know that—"

"Oh, she is!"

"She's good, but there's more to it than that. You've got to think of the effect. On the people."

"How do you mean, exactly."

He looked at me searchingly for a second, as if somehow weighing me personally in the light of what he was going to say next—a troubled look, too, and somehow a little pathetic.

"Well—" he said—"take yourself. Or Mr. Nash."

"Yes?"

"You come to our show, and, as you say, of course, you like my

wife, and that's all right. But then, you see, there is this 'star' business. You see what I mean? There's always got to be a star. *One* of the performers has got to be outstanding—otherwise, you've got no climax."

"I see. Yes."

"You see?" He was visibly relieved at my agreement—he smiled, and went on a shade more confidently. "You've got to have that climax. People want a show to be built *up* to something. And that's what the kid won't see."

"No?"

"No. And that's what the trouble is. We can't both of us do the fancy stuff, can we? And what I say is, the audience wants to see the *man* do that, not the woman. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, I think perhaps you're right."

"Of course I'm right! But *she* won't see it—no, she won't see it."

He shook his head, gazing perplexedly down at his swinging feet, and the grass, where the stub of a cigarette was smoking, and repeated once more—

"She just won't see it. Mind you, *I* know she could do some of the things, *some* of them—she's got all the nerve in the world, anybody can see that—but that isn't the point. And then, besides, there's the risk. No woman is quite as good as a man—she's more liable to nerves, more liable to make a slip—and in this business there can't *be* any slips. Well, I tell her that, but it doesn't do any good. She's after me from morning to night, wanting this or that, just to try it once, or try it twice—you know how a woman is, and if you give in you're gone . . ."

He looked at me quickly, and away—and I felt sorry for him.

"Well—" I said a little lamely—"I think you're perfectly right. The show, as it is, is as good as it could possibly be. Your wife, with her beauty, just adds the right touch—but if I were you *I* certainly wouldn't let her do anything else! Not me."

"You think that?"

"I do indeed."

"Well, I wish someone could persuade her—but when she gets an idea—!"

He laughed, frankly, boyishly, and affectionately too, as if he were thinking very precisely of his wife's beautiful stubbornness,

and then he swung himself down to the ground, and I saw that his assistant, the mechanic, was approaching.

"Well," I said, "I expect you'll see us again later!"

"Right-o. And I say, will you tell Mr. Nash I'd like to see some of those photographs?"

"Yes—of course."

He was off then, with a quick nervous wave of the hand, and I had already turned away toward the cliff steps that led to the town when I heard him add—

"And please excuse me, will you? Got a little tuning to do!"—

I waved—he waved in answer—it was the last time we were to exchange greetings, though not by any means, the last time I was to see him. . . . That was to be a year later.

III

A year later—yes. And almost to the day.

By that time, we had all but forgotten him, hadn't we—? and the beautiful girl who had been killed at Folkstone, while riding blindfold in a "novelty show"—so the newspaper phrased it—called the Drome of Death. We had read about it, only a few days after they had left us; and we had been inexpressibly shocked and saddened; and then the boy had written to Paul, and asked if he could have some of the photographs; and Paul had sent them. . . .

But a year later the same little fair came back, and with it again—much to our surprise—the Drome of Death. At first we thought it must be another—for it didn't look quite right, somehow, and it was certainly a great deal shabbier, as if it weren't properly kept up. Our doubts were resolved when we drew a little nearer.

There, on the faded plush dais, stood the boy—but himself too somehow faded and cheapened, and looking almost haggard—the beauty had gone out of him. Beside him was a girl, a little dark creature, dull-faced, dull-eyed. The same blue riding suits—but now, no silver wings. The boy was smoking a cigarette, and for a moment, when he saw us, he looked guilty. The recognition wavered, as it were, between us—and then he lifted his chin, proudly, turned his head, turned his eyes, and coldly, fiercely dismissed us. . . .

And, with a pang, I knew that he was right.

The Fixed Grin

by Robert Kinney

It was raining a little when John came out of the locker room, so he paused for a moment in the doorway. Boys were running haphazardly from the Fifth Form commons room across the lawn to Lewis Hall. He watched them, smiling a bit. This was his third try at a prep-school, and he hoped the last. North or South, they were all alike. The prep-school stamp. He smiled again: Well, he wasn't stamped. Dad had wanted him to try this place, Chardwell Hall, because he heard that it was different, a better, more understanding one than the others. Well, it wasn't. It was only larger. At least at the last one, Lonsdale, he had a few friends.

John ran quickly through the rain around the path to the athletic office. When he went in he saw that Coach was busy with one of the lower school kids, bandaging his knee.

"You want me to wait, Coach?" he said. "A guy said you wanted to see me."

Coach looked up at him from under his heavy grey eyebrows. "Sit down there, son. I'll get to you in a minute."

John took one of the varnished straight chairs and looked around, twirling the Spanish grammar he was carrying. The place was littered with the usual athletic office array of rolls of bandage tape, gauze, stray football pads, and medicine bottles. There was a heavy odor of oil of wintergreen in the air.

He watched Coach fooling with the boy. He was a large, barrel-chested man with long burly arms, but there was a curious wistful quality about the man. You knew he thought he was tough and wanted you to think so too, but his occasional gentleness—as now with the boy, treating his twisted knee with gruff care as he wound it—and the way his eyes softened sometimes gave him away. You remembered at these times that you had heard about his son, how he had been killed in a car wreck. John liked Coach and felt sorry for him. Teaching schoolboys how to handle a football and dribble a basketball was no job for a man with much self-respect. He felt Coach knew it too.

"Now, boy," Coach was saying, breathing hard from bending

over, "You take care of that damned thing. And cut out that bellywash, that candy you're always lugging around!" He patted the kid roughly on the back and shoved him toward the door. "Shoo!"

Coach tugged wearily at his khaki pants, then shut the door and turned to John.

"Well, Littlefield, they tell me you're in a little trouble?" He walked heavily over to his desk and sat down, wheezing and pawing at his bald head. But he smiled a little.

"I reckon so," John said. He wasn't going to commit himself yet.

"You haven't made many friends around here, have you, son?"

"No. None at all, Coach," he answered.

Coach peered seriously at him, then fumbled in the drawer for his pipe. He found it and knocked it on the side of the desk. He scowled.

"It's your own fault! These boys think you're a snob because you go around acting so aloof. Why, hell, if you were six feet tall and weighed a couple of hundred pounds you could get away with something like that! But look at you! What do you weigh?"

"A hundred and twenty-five. I weighed in yesterday."

"I thought so. You're as thin as one of the school's Sunday chickens. Listen," he said, a wistful look coming into his eyes, "I know boys, see? And when some spindly little egg like you goes around by himself all the time and doesn't seem to fit into the things most boys like—and if he isn't too good a scholar, as I hear is your case—then that little egg attracts attention. The others get to wondering about him. Now it was all right as long as you didn't do anything but keep them curious. They didn't have anything definite to lay on you. If you liked it that was fine! . . . But now I hear you've given them something they can get their teeth in.

"They wouldn't have bothered you if you hadn't stuck your neck out about the game with Lonsdale this afternoon. For the last three years running Lonsdale has run over us pitifully, and there is a lot of feeling about this game. Why on earth did you tell them you were going to sit on Lonsdale's side of the field?"

John looked quickly at Coach. So they'd told him all about it? "A couple of the Six Form boys asked me if I didn't go to Lonsdale last year. Then, at the pep-meeting last night, they told a lot of lies about Lonsdale giving free tuition to the football

team. They said a lot of silly things like that. I told them they were a bunch of liars. Then they asked me why I didn't go over and sit on the Lonsdale bench if I liked the place so well. I told them I would. I said I thought that was a good idea . . . then they threw me out." John's voice had stayed level. He stared down at the red Spanish grammar in his hands.

Coach waited a minute, watching him, then walked to the window and looked out into the rain. "Well, Littlefield, I guess I see how it is. I don't know. I like you, son, but I want these boys to like you. I want you to get along here. I wouldn't be hasty now."

"I'm not coming back here after Xmas, Coach. I have no friends here and don't want to have—now. I want to talk to my friends this afternoon—there are a couple on the Lonsdale team —and I can't see anything wrong in that."

Coach's voice grew quiet now. He was being nice, John saw. "These are all good boys, son, they're good boys, but they're normal. They eat too much and they like to have their little hard and fast rules about what they think is sportsmanship and school loyalty. And, you can't get around it: boys are going to think who isn't with them is against them, no matter what the facts may be. They know you went to Lonsdale, and they really hate those Lonsdale boys!

"Even if you do leave here Xmas they'll make things awfully nasty for you if you go out there this afternoon and make a fool of yourself. Xmas vacation doesn't start until three weeks from now, remember that. If you're determined to go through with this foolishness, you're done for. They'll beat you up pretty badly tonight, and I'm afraid they'll have the sympathy of most of the masters here. You see," Coach said queerly, "most of the masters in prep-schools have the same set of ideals as their pupils . . ." Then he laughed abruptly, embarrassed—"But don't you dare quote me!"

It wasn't any good, John knew. He felt sorry for Coach suddenly—he was being so damned decent about all this. He knew Coach would stand up for him if he had to, and if it would do any good, but he also knew Coach didn't want to.

His position at the school was already shaky and he had a wife to support. And his intervention wouldn't have much effect anyway.

He went over to Coach and they shook hands. "Thanks a lot," John said, "I appreciate this—really. But it's no use. I couldn't back down now."

Coach looked out at the rain. "No, boy, I don't guess you could."

John left the school right after lunch and went to the stadium in town. There was no one around yet. It gave him time to think, but he didn't much want to think. He knew what he was going to do. He lounged back against the wall of the stadium, waiting for the Lonsdale bus, and smoked a cigarette. He would get twenty-five demerits if he was caught smoking, but he didn't care now. To pass the time and to keep his mind off other things he wondered about his friends. He wondered especially if Buck Harrison—who was sure to come as he was the best end they had—would be older and dignified now and call him Littlefield, as he had in his recent letters, or whether he would be the same as when they had roomed together and call him John-John. There would be Buck Harrison and Tiny Shepherd and Paul Sellers . . . It would be good to see them again.

John suddenly felt hurt and young, realizing how lonely he had been . . .

* * *

John sat on the Lonsdale bench between Paul Sellers, the water boy, and the Coach, Mr. Simmons. It seemed very natural to be there, and when Buck and Tiny came back from warming up and he told them about what had happened, they laughed and thought it was funny as hell. John laughed with them, after a bit, and began to think it was funny as hell too . . .

When he told Mr. Simmons, he received a smile. "We're leaving after supper—come back with us if you like. If you are really leaving Xmas anyway," he amended seriously.

John thought it over for a moment. But he didn't want to make Dad sore . . . and there was no use running out on the school. They would say he was yellow and had let the Senior Council scare him into it. He could wait until Xmas, and not come back after the vacation.

"Thanks, but I guess Ill see it through, sir," he said.

"They probably won't do anything to you anyway, Littlefield. Just trying to scare you a little."

"Sure," John said, "They're just trying to scare me." He felt a lot better now. Maybe they were just trying to scare him.

* * *

It was in the middle of the fourth quarter that it happened. Before the half both teams had been sluggish, seemingly waiting for the latter half to start serious scoring attempts. In the third quarter both sides had started opening up. Each of the teams scored once, but Lonsdale's try for an extra point failed, the kick going wide of the goal posts. Chardwell Hall led, seven to six. In the fourth quarter Lonsdale started a march down the field, then called for time out on Chardwell Hall's twenty yard line. Coach Simmons looked around for Paul to take the water and sponges out. But he had gone to the dressing room for some bandages. The substitutes were all down at one end of the field. There was no one to take the bucket and things out to the team, and he couldn't yell loud enough against the noise the crowd in the stands was making to attract the attention of the substitutes. Coach Simmons started running heavily toward the dressing room. John watched him. He could see the coach would never make it in time now. The time allowed for rest was over half up. Then he looked at the Lonsdale team. They were gesturing nervously at him, perhaps not really knowing, in their anxiety, just who he was. He saw that they were fagged and wretched . . .

Then he did that fool thing. He leaned over and grabbed the water bucket and the sponges and ran out on the field. As he ran he noticed the sudden silence in the Chardwell Hall stands.

Lonsdale made another touchdown just before the gun, completed the extra point, and the game was over. The final score was Lonsdale: thirteen, Chardwell Hall: seven.

He was crossing the field several yards behind the team when he saw them coming. Eddie Bowers and Chuck Bilden, two Chardwell Hall substitutes, grabbed him by the arms and dragged him toward their bus.

"You don't have to hold me," John said, "I won't run."

"We know damned well you won't run."

"Yeah, you won't run . . ."

They didn't do so much to him on the bus going back to school. They put him on the steel floor between the seats and stripped his coat off and tore his shirt. And they pulled his pants down and beat on him for a while with fibre knee pads. And one of them

slapped him several times and then beat his head on the floor. But he managed to hold up pretty well. He didn't cry or anything. But he had started out on the bus with a fixed sort of grin on his face and after they had roughed him around a bit he felt it was still there. He could not seem to get rid of the grin.

They stopped the bus behind the gym and threw him out. He picked up his coat and went around to the middle dormitory. In his room before washing up for supper he examined his face in the mirror for the tight grin he had felt on the bus. It was still there. He twisted his face and stretched his mouth several times, but each time the grin came back.

After supper he skipped chapel, going down the hill behind the dining hall to a grove of tall pine trees. He sat down and smoked.

His thoughts were jumbled and fragmentary. He felt numb and calm, but he knew he was afraid somewhere deep inside himself. He tried and tried to find some explanation for taking the water out on the field. There didn't seem to be any logic in the action. It had just happened. He felt justified in everything else. He wondered about leaving right away and joining the Lonsdale team at the hotel in town. He could be home in two days. But Dad would raise the roof. And they would call him yellow here. He had started the thing, so he had better see it through. . . . He was lonely.

* * *

When they woke him up he was amused to see that the two who had come for him wore masks and carried large red candles. The candles dripped wax on the bedblothes.

"Get up, Littlefield," one of them said. "We've arranged a little party for you."

"Just let me get a robe . . ."

"You'll be warm enough, damn you!" They jerked him out of the bed. John walked between them down the hall and across to the gym. It was cold and there was a moon, he noticed.

The room to the right of the gym, the Senior Commons, was dimly lighted by seven or eight of the large candles arranged on chairs around the walls. There were about twenty masked figures in the room. Two of them were seated behind a large desk at one end, and the rest were sitting down in a semi-circle, facing the desk. About twenty thick paddles with holes bored in their ends were stacked again the desk on one side, and on top of it, just above the paddles, a row of taped and padded baseball bats rested.

The two on either side of John halted him roughly in front of the desk. The middle figure seated behind tapped heavily with a wooden hammer.

"Is this John Beatty Littlefield?"

"Yes," they all said. It was like a chant.

The hammer rapped on the desk again, ringing sharply against the tense silence. John knew this was all ridiculous, but the atmosphere, though overdone, was successful. He felt the grin again and hated it because it was beyond his control.

The boy in the middle behind the desk stared at him. "Littlefield," he said suddenly.

John waited.

"Littlefield!"

"Yes . . ."

"Yes, *sir!*"

"Yes, sir," John said levelly.

"Littlefield," he said solemnly, "We have had boys before this council for stealing, for cheating at gambling, for trouble with town girls . . . and worse things—but I want to say right now that I've never seen, never heard of, a boy coming before this Council for as low a thing as you are guilty of!" A low muttering spread.

"Have you anything to say?"

"I'm sorry I took the water out. I don't know what made me do that."

"Is that *all?*"

"That's all," John said quietly. He wished they would get it over. What he said was true: he really hadn't any more to say.

After some moments of bickering among themselves the boys quieted. The center figure behind the table rapped again.

"All right, Littlefield," he said, rising. "Now—one last thing. Would you mind fighting me?"

"No," John looked at him. "No I don't."

"Am I too big for you? Take a look around and find someone smaller. We'd all consider it a pleasure to beat you up personally . . ."

"I don't want to fight anyone."

"Twenty licks with the paddles, five with the bats!" the boy yelled. "Littlefield, I want you to know that we have permission from the faculty for this, and from Dr. Benwell . . ."

They bent over him, tying his wrists to his ankles. Then they

pulled down his pajama trousers and lined up twenty feet behind him.

It wasn't so bad. After the first round of paddling he began to yell a little, and he got so he would scream when he heard one of them running at him with a paddle. But he didn't completely break down or beg them to stop. It was only when they finished the licks with paddles and started with the baseball bats that he was afraid he was going to have to beg them to stop. He had to be held up then. Stooped as he was, he couldn't keep his balance. But finally one of the bats lost its padding and splashed blood all over when it hit him. They got scared then and quit.

They washed the blood off the floor and desk very carefully. But some of it had splashed on one boy and he started crying violently. John laughed then. He couldn't stop laughing. When they carried him back to his room he was still laughing. It wasn't hysteria, he thought: it was just that everything was so damned funny.

After they left him, the boy who had cried crept into the room. He had a little bottle of brandy he had sneaked in from a weekend and some salve. While he rubbed the salve on John's back and seat the boy kept telling him how sorry he was about it. John said Hell, it was all right. He understood.

John drank the brandy and felt better. He went off to sleep right away.

* * *

He waked while the light was still grey in the room. As soon as he opened his eyes he knew what he had to do. He didn't even have to plan it. He packed a bag, moving gingerly because of his back and seat, and left a dollar and a note for the dormitory Negro, telling him to pack the trunk and get it off.

He went out to the hall and called a cab. Then he called Mr. Faber, the assistant headmaster. He knew it wasn't any use calling Dr. Benwell, the headmaster. He got Mr. Faber finally.

He went over to Mr. Faber's cottage next door and told him about it while he yawned and had coffee. John saw right away that he didn't know anything about it.

Mr. Faber asked him if they had beaten him much, and John said no, not so much—that wasn't why he was leaving. He just didn't like the school and the school didn't like him.

Mr. Faber finally shrugged contemptuously and said if that was the way he felt about it that was just too bad. They wouldn't try,

to keep him. But he wouldn't give him any money. He said John would have to wait until after breakfast when the Administration office opened if he wanted to draw his allowance deposit.

John looked at him sitting there in his blue silk dressing gown. "You go quietly to hell, sir," John said. "I have some money—enough for my ticket anyway." They stared at each other. John could hear him at the faculty meeting: "And the impudent pup swore at me! Why, gentlemen, I don't blame our boys for what little they may have done to him . . ." John thought that would be just fine. . . .

* * *

At the bus station he found he hadn't enough money for his fare to Washington, after all—the fare was sixteen dollars and he only had fourteen and a half, and he would have to eat. But he remembered that he could wire Dad to send him money at Winston-Salem —then he could pick it up when the bus went through.

He found a seat to himself at the rear of the bus, folded his topcoat and stretched out on it. He lit a cigarette and lolled back. He distinctly felt that grin fixed on his face, but he didn't worry about it much now. That grin was going to be with him a long time, he knew. And anyway he was beginning to rather like it.

Daughter of Danny the Red

by Roderick Lull

It was the first time I had seen my uncle alone for weeks, and I was enjoying myself. There was in it a pleasant sense of guilt, what with knowing of the small opinion the women-folk in our family had of his habits and his morals—an opinion that even my father was beginning to share to an extent. My uncle and I were talking seriously of serious things—primarily the raising and training of hunting spaniels, which to most of the men in our country was the most vital of topics. I was having sarsaparilla and my uncle a shot of rye, when the man came into the bar with the news that a bitch sired by Danny the Red was for sale. That would have been big news on any occasion. And now it was tremendous news indeed, for Danny the Red was dead—dead of an accident in the hunting field, which was a proper way for a dog of his ilk to die—and this bitch was the last of his get.

My uncle kept his voice calm as he asked questions, but I could feel the excitement in it. And no wonder. If you know anything of Springer Spaniels at all you will have heard of Danny the Red. There are those who still say he was the finest of them all when it came to real work in the field. And whether he was or whether he wasn't, today more good Springers go back to him, a long trail, than to any other sire.

It seemed that Danny's owner had died shortly after his dog's death and left his widow with two bitches—the one sired by Danny, the other of different breeding. Like most men whose life was the breeding and training and hunting of sporting dogs, he had died poor. His widow was going away to relatives in the East and was selling her possessions. She was now staying with friends near town and had the dogs with her.

My uncle looked down at me and his eyes were bright and eager. "About through, boy?" he asked. We finished our drinks together. "We'll go take a look," he said then. "Glad to have you along. You'll tell me your opinion of her."

My uncle drove the trotter fast. And suddenly my feeling of joyous association was gone. I felt unsure and nervous. For all

the effort I gave to trying not to think of the hunting trip he and my father had taken me on last year, I thought of it the harder. It was a sore thing too seldom out of my mind. I had failed them, I knew, and miserably. I hadn't held up my end in anything—not in the shooting, the skinning and butchering of the deer, or the making of camp and the handling of the horses. They had been kind about it, especially my uncle, and their kindness had been like a blow in the face. For in their expression, in an occasional unguarded word between them, it was evident that I was a disappointment and might, indeed, lack the stuff of manhood entirely. I remembered how desperately I had wanted to explain, to say something compelling in extenuation, and there had been no words for it. You came through or you didn't. And now my uncle was taking me to see a hunting dog and pretending my opinion would be of value. But again, his kindness was a bitter, hurting thing.

My uncle's brow was furrowed, his face serious and intent. "A bitch of Dan's," he said as if talking to himself, "could be worth a man's income for a year. Of course she may be no good—Lord knows Danny sired some of that kind too. On the other hand . . ."

Ten minutes later my uncle slapped my knee. "There's Hargan's house, where she's staying. How'd you like to have a hand in the making of her, Bub?"

"That'd be fine," I said in a half whisper, trying not to choke.

"Well, don't go planning on anything yet. No doubt we're due for a disappointment—just a pure waste of time." But I knew by the note in his voice that he expected the opposite.

The widow, a pale, ineffectual woman who obviously knew nothing of dogs, led us out to a small wire-enclosed yard at the back of the house, and there were the two bitches. They were real beauties for you, with bodies soft as velvet to your hand, yet flexing with good hard muscles beneath the skin. Great eyes, dark brown and deep. Feet padded well and too big for them, as they should be. And chests, even though they were little past the suckling stage, that told of strength and power. They were both black and white and alike as peas in a pod.

Alike as peas in a pod to me, that is. But not to my uncle. For a few minutes he handled them both, then drew one bitch away. He ran his hand down her flanks and stood up. "That's

Danny's girl," he said, and so sure was the note in his voice that it was like a man announcing his name.

"There's tags in their collars my husband put there that tells which is which," the widow said. "I don't know one from the other. Only, my husband said one was much more valuable than the other."

My uncle looked idly at the tag on the collar of the dog he had picked, then dropped it and smiled at me. "I was right," he said softly, and there was no vanity in his voice at all. "No man could fail to pick Danny's girl from the other, could he, Bub?"

"No, Uncle Ned." It was a great lie, for I couldn't have told had my life hung on my decision.

"Of course not," he said. He slowly rubbed his chin with one hand and turned to the widow. "What is your price, ma'am?"

She stared at him, and her voice faltered. "My husband said—he said the best one, whichever it is, should bring a hundred dollars. And the other fifty. He said a hundred dollars would be very cheap."

My uncle stared back at her. He looked away—at me, at the ground, at the dogs, at the sky, then at the dogs again. "Too cheap," he said in a low voice. I knew what he was feeling—it would have been a good game to have made a hard bargain with a man who knew what he was doing. But this was obviously different. "I think—well, I will give you a hundred and fifty for her. Fifty now. The rest when I come for her, in about ten days. I have to be away that time. I suppose the people here will be willing that she stay. I'll pay them."

Mrs. Byrnes was still thanking him, to my uncle's embarrassment, when a man's voice behind us said, "Good afternoon."

We swung around. John Forest stood there, his hat pushed back from his forehead. I heard my uncle draw a quick breath. And my uncle's voice when he said, "Good day, Forest," was polite and level and colder than the Arctic. Forest and my uncle had always been enemies, for no reason I understood. They had argued, and once they had fought. My uncle had said that John Forest was a no-good and a crook. And John Forest had said the time would come when the words would be returned with interest.

Forest turned to the widow. "I'm told you have a bitch of Danny's here. I came to see her."

My uncle answered for her. "I've bought her," he said. "But she's another good bitch to sell. She should get seventy-five for

her and she'll make a mistake if she takes a cent less. And—don't touch my dog, Forest."

My uncle strode away and I followed him. I said something about Forest maybe making trouble—after all he had money and was a power in the county. "He won't be making any trouble," my Uncle said. "Not unless he wants it back double, with interest. And now I got to hustle and raise that other hundred. I tell you, Bub, she'll make a dog like you never saw before. I could feel it, looking at her."

My mother sniffed when she heard I'd been with Uncle Ned. She spoke to my father. "If he wasn't a relative, you'd never think of letting Joe near him."

"He's my brother and he's the boy's uncle," my father said. The way he spoke, not looking her in the eye, I knew he half-agreed with her, and it made me sick sorrowful to see it.

I didn't go to sleep right off that night. I kept thinking of how surely my uncle had told Danny's bitch from the other, when they looked to me like a pair from one litter. And I kept thinking along with that of how I'd fallen down last year. It was dark thinking, and just before I went off to sleep I wondered if there would ever be happiness in me again.

I was working in the barn when Mr. Selfridge, our nearest neighbor, came by and asked where my father was. I could tell by the grave look on his fat, kindly face that he had bad news. I told him my father was in the house, then went slowly about my work again, wondering what it was he had come to say. Suddenly I was sure it had to do with my uncle. We had been expecting him for three days and I knew he would stop to see us before going to his own ranch.

In half an hour Mr. Selfridge reappeared on the porch, my father with him. I saw my father shake his head, then shake hands awkwardly with Mr. Selfridge, using his left hand. He had broken his right arm a week before and it was still in a splint.

Mr. Selfridge walked out to the road, got into his buggy and drove away. As soon as he had gone my father called, "Joe!" in a high-pitched angry voice, and I dropped my work like hot lead to leg it for the house.

Both my parents were in the kitchen. My father's thin, leathery face was dark as a winter night, and even my mother had lost her usual optimistic expression. But she was trying to cheer him up.

"After all," she was saying, "it isn't as if Ned had committed a murder. And there may be a mistake."

My father turned on her furiously. "It may not be murder, but a man who'd steal a dog in this county—" he broke off and lifted his hand in a tired gesture. Then he swung on me. "We're going to town, now. Hitch up. With this blasted arm of mine I can't even drive. Get going."

I said weakly, "What's wrong—is it about Uncle Ned?"

My father's eyes burned hot. "Move!" he said. I moved.

I was ready with the buggy in record time. I drove to the house and sat waiting, my nerves pumping at white heat. At last my father came out, pulling on his hat, my mother following. She handed up my jacket along with a package.

"Be back as soon as we can," my father said shortly. "This may take a while. Don't worry—not that there's nothing to worry about." He kissed her quickly, in the half-embarrassed way he always did, and climbed into the wagon, cursing his bad arm methodically and in sulphurous terms. He lit his pipe and settled back. "We're off," he said then. "And don't think because I can't drive you're going to do any showing off. I'm here to tell you what to do and when to do it and how, and you're listening and doing it."

I was burning to know the story Mr. Selfridge had brought. But for a long time my father sat still, smoking in silence, staring straight ahead with his eyes half shut. Then at last he began to talk. It was curious talk, the sort of a monologue a man makes to himself in times of mental stress. I listened, still as a mouse. Little by little the situation became clear.

My uncle had returned from his trip and gone to get his dog. According to his story there was a dog there all right, but it wasn't Danny's bitch. It was the other, which he learned had been bought by Forest. He'd had no proof, of course—the tags had disappeared. But he swore over and over again that he'd stake his neck on it. The upshot was that he'd gone to Forest's place, beaten him badly and taken the dog which Forest claimed. And now my uncle was in jail and Forest was prosecuting him for assault and battery, which was a small thing in our county, and for the deliberate theft of a valuable hunting dog, which was a very serious thing indeed.

I listened. Finally I couldn't keep silent any longer. "Uncle Ned wouldn't steal a dog, and he couldn't make a mistake like that!" I cried. "Forest's the man they should have arrested."

My father laughed. It was a mirthless laugh. "Easy said. You prove it, boy. You prove it so a judge will believe you. You've got quite a job cut out for you. Particularly after some of those mistakes Ned's made in the past. A man makes so many mistakes and then—well, you can hardly blame people if they come to thinking that maybe he's just a crook."

My voice was shaking when I spoke again. "But look—Uncle Ned knew that dog. He had his choice. I was right with him. Even if he'd been wrong, there were tags to show which dog was which. If he'd wanted the other dog he could have had her. He'd paid his money down before Mr. Forest ever showed up."

My father looked at me with sad impatience in his eyes. "Proves nothing. People would be prepared to believe Ned might make that kind of a mistake—that he'd picked the wrong one. And that when he'd found it out some way he'd tried to repair it by beating up Forest and taking his dog. As for the tags—hell, they don't prove a thing. Anyway, they're gone, according to Selfridge."

I stared at my father's profile, and it was hard and thin. A little muscle moved nervously in his cheek. And there was only one thing left to say. "He knew that dog soon as he saw her, even if the two of them were almost twins," I said. "All he had to do was run his hands over them and watch them move around a minute and it was all over. He said to me it was something anybody could see."

"He was always a great talker," my father said. "Always a man to blow his own horn. And—did you see it too? What he saw?"

I almost said "yes." But my father was looking at me and I knew I never could make him believe me. So I said weakly, "No, but I don't know about dogs the way Uncle Ned does."

Already, I thought, Ned was half condemned in my father's mind. He didn't believe what I said—and no wonder, after the incompetent I'd proved myself when it had come to the showdown last year. There hadn't been a thing I'd been able to do the way they had wanted it. The worst thing of all was my failure to keep from blubbering when I'd cut myself with the axe and they were pouring iodine into the wound. I could remember yet the look in my father's eyes. And I could hear my uncle's flat voice saying, "After all, Fred, he's only fourteen." And my father's voice, "What's that got to do with it? What's fourteen or forty got to do with it?"

I wanted to press right through to town but my father insisted

we stop to eat the lunch my mother had hastily put together for us. He sat with his back to a tree, eating awkwardly because of his stiff, useless arm, and his eyes were dark under a furrowed brow. I had a hunch what he was thinking. This might cost money, and money was a thing of which we had mighty little any more. And worse than that it would make a scandal that would speed like lightning through the county and tar all members of the family.

My father finished his lunch and climbed into the buggy. I took my place in the driving seat. "A man could," my father said slowly, and when I looked at him I saw that his teeth were clenched hard on the pipe stem—"a man could talk to Forest and sort of appeal to his better nature, as they say. A man could do that if he had to."

And I knew my father could perform no more bitter task.

We came into town, a worried and woe-begone pair, and drove sedately down the dirt street. "We'll go to see Judge Tolliver," my father said. "Then we'll see Ned, and figure out what to do."

Judge Tolliver was in his office working over some papers. He stood up and shook hands enthusiastically with my father—a little too enthusiastically, I thought. He spoke cheerfully to me and offered us chairs. He asked us our business, though obviously he knew perfectly well.

"Not that I'm not always glad to see you, business or no business, George," he said, rubbing one side of his big red nose with a forefinger. "But this time I take it, it's a professional call."

My father sat down in one of the old pine chairs. I leaned against the wall. "It's about Ned," my father said.

Judge Tolliver looked at the ceiling. He and my father were old acquaintances and it was obvious that he was uncomfortable. "Yes," he said. "Regrettable. A damned shame. Frankly, I can't understand it. I tried to talk to Ned and all I got was curses and wild statements about what he was going to do to Forest."

"I know," my father said. He stood up and walked the length of the room and back. "What kind of case has Forest got?"

"A good case," Judge Tolliver said quietly. "After all, Ned took the dog from him by force. I understand no one can tell one of these damned bitches apart. And that's hardly the point anyway. The burden of proof is on Ned. And if he can't furnish satisfactory proof—well, you know how people feel about such matters around here."

"Do you feel he's guilty, Judge? That he decided he'd slipped in the first place picking a dog and tried to fix it up that crazy way?"

The judge looked at the ceiling again and my father nodded. "We won't take any more of your time, Judge, thanks. We'll go see Ned now, if there's no objection."

"None at all. You know the jailer."

In the doorway my father paused. "When'll the case come up, Judge?"

"Tomorrow at one. I'll grant a delay if you want."

"Don't know what good that could do. Well, thanks, Judge."

Ned was lying on the jail bunk, smoking cigarettes. He looked at us and gave no sign of recognition.

"Ned," my father said, and his voice was hot and sharp.

"So they called out the reserves," Ned said. "What the hell do you want?"

"Did you steal Forest's dog?"

Uncle Ned laughed loudly and I saw my father clench his fists.

"I asked a question and I expect an answer." My father's voice shook with anger.

"Go ahead and expect," my uncle said.

"I see," my father said softly. "I understand. I might have figured it. The truth is, I did, only I tried not to believe myself, my own reason. Just a damned dog thief!"

Ned sat up and his chest swelled beneath his thin shirt. "You're my brother," he said. "But I've a mind to break your damned neck."

My father made a contemptuous sound. He grabbed me hard by the arm, his fingers biting like steel bands into my flesh, and we started for the open cell door. I looked back and saw Ned lying down again, rolling a cigarette.

My father did not speak as we walked down the street toward the hotel, and his manner when he demanded a room said plainer than words that he wanted no conversation from the clerk. I'd seen him in black moods before, but none so black as this.

That night I was a long time going to sleep, and when I finally did I dreamed a dream more vivid than any I had ever known. It was a dream of two bitches, alike as peas in a pod so far as I could see, at work in the field. And I was trying desperately to find the difference that was between them, the difference I could not see, for my uncle's future depended upon it. He was accused of a great crime

and no one had faith in him save me. But no matter how hard I tried they still seemed alike as those two peas in a pod. Some times I felt for an instant that I saw something that set one apart from the other. But always, when I tried to pin it down it went away, leaving me lost and discouraged.

The dream was fast in my mind when I wakened. My father was already up and it was then that I made the suggestion. He at once dismissed it as useless and I argued with him as I rarely had before. It could do no harm, I pointed out; it might do good. And when he laughed ironically and asked me just how I expected it to do anything save make us ridiculous and emphasize the pathetic feebleness of our defense, I had to admit it was all a cloud of an idea. But still, I said—I wished he would. I wished it tremendously.

"All right," he said finally. "I'll do it." He stood up and threw his cigar savagely away. "You go get your own breakfast—I don't want any. I'll take a little walk and do some thinking and I'll drop in on the Judge to ask him if your idea's all right with him."

My father came back a little before noon and that black look was blacker still. The Judge, he said, had agreed to my request that the hearing be held out of doors, with the dogs on the scene.

Promptly at one my father and I drove the two miles out of town to the Judge's little ranch. The Judge and Forest were already there; Forest was smoking a big cigar at a fast rate and complaining about the idiocy of being dragged out here for an open-and-shut case. Ten minutes later a surrey turned in at the gate. My uncle was in it, sitting next to one of the deputies. Another deputy rode in the rear with the two dogs.

I watched my uncle get slowly down from the seat and walk toward Forest and the Judge. He walked past my father and myself without a sign of recognition. He walked straight up to Forest and stopped a half-dozen feet away. He stood with his hands on hips, smiling a little, and stared at him. For a long time Forest stared back. Then he shrugged his shoulders and swung around to say something to the Judge. And my uncle's laugh, hard and bitter, rang out across the hot, level fields.

The deputy took the dogs from the buggy and put them down, leashed together. I looked at them, and normally it would have been an ecstatic, exciting thing. Now it was anything but that. I looked them over carefully and I'd never seen two dogs more perfectly matched. There were minor differences of marking, but you had to

look hard to find them. I went to them and stroked their sleek bodies and they quivered with pleasure. I was hoping for something harder than I'd ever hoped for anything before. Maybe it was hoping against hope, but I told myself that the daughter of Danny the Red wouldn't let us down. I told it to myself over and over again, fiercely.

Then the Judge spoke and I turned about toward the little group of men. "This shouldn't take much time," he said slowly. "We all know what the case is about, so there's no need for me to go into it. Mr. Forest, have you anything to say?"

Forest took his time about lighting a fresh cigar. "Only this," he said, and his voice had a dark, hard note about it. "I bought a dog and paid good cash for her. This man Bristol came to my place and said I had stolen his dog. I told him he was crazy and he attacked me. And he took my dog. He claimed that I had taken the wrong one of the two Mrs. Byrnes had sold us. It's true he bought Danny's bitch, as he says, and that I bought the other. Maybe he decided afterwards the other was the better dog. I don't know, I do know what he did."

"You don't deny that Mr. Bristol bought Danny's bitch?"

"Of course not. Maybe he did not know that the best dogs will produce worthless dogs, sometimes."

The Judge nodded. "You can identify your dog, Mr. Forest? Or shall I say, the dog you believed to be yours, the dog whose ownership Mr. Bristol contests?"

Forest pointed to the dog at the left. "You'll notice she has more black on her chest than the other."

The Judge turned to my uncle. "That is the dog you say is yours?"

"Yes. I know that dog is mine."

"At the time of purchase did you notice the slight difference in chest marking?"

"No, but I know the dog. She's from Danny the Red."

"Can you prove the dog is yours?"

My uncle's jaw hardened to a tight, dark line. "I'm not a lawyer. But I know what I know. I was never fooled on a dog."

The Judge drew a long breath and looked around. "Has anyone else anything to say?"

There was a silence. When I spoke my voice sounded to me

like thunder and I flushed. "Judge Tolliver," I said, "if you don't mind—it's an idea I got—would you have those dogs turned loose?"

Forest shouted, "I object to this folderol! It's as open and shut a case as you ever saw. Let's put an end to it."

The Judge faced him quietly. "I'll thank you not to interrupt, Mr. Forest." He turned back to me. "All right, I can't see where that can do any good but then it can do no damage either. The dogs are yours, boy."

We were in fine pheasant cover, and I took the dogs from the deputy and led them away from the men toward some long rows of corn. They bounded against me, tangling in the double leash, obviously pleased at the chance to move about. A few feet from the corn I unsnapped the leash. They tore across country exhausting some of their boundless energy. Then they steadied down.

I walked ahead and they walked with me, following erratic courses of their own. They were completely untrained, guided only by instinct, only by the deep, sure knowledge which was as much a part of them as their coats, and as natural and untaught. Suddenly they both paused and stood with noses lifted, sniffing hard. There was something in the wind, their eyes said—there was something there calling to them, something that went far back into the blackness of time and was filled with mysterious meaning and a great compulsion. What it was they did not know—they only knew that it was there, lovely and thrilling and demanding. It was there ahead somewhere, reaching out to them, touching them almost physically, the strongest thing they had ever known.

They charged in, starting together, a pair of wild puppies, driven by instinct as by the lash to where the pheasants crouched. They both had the quality known as style, that which a dog is born with or goes his whole life without. And for me to say one was better or worse than the other would have been the same as saying that there is a difference between hats of the same make and quality and style ranged in a row in a showcase. I remember that my heart was pounding and that I stared until my eyeballs burned and hurt with strain, looking for something, anything, that might distinguish them. I was very close to admitting that it was not there, for me. Oh, it was there for others, all right, for men like my uncle. But not for me. And if that branded me as a failure, it was not a thing to occasion wonder. It was simply the hard, undeniable fact.

Almost, I think, I turned away, heavy with shame for another

failure, sick with myself for having made fools of us all, for having even further prejudiced an impossible case. But it was then that a cock pheasant rose, cackling hysterically, and flew away. One dog broke, going wild, raising her voice. And the other dog—well, the other dog followed the pheasant's course too, going fast and hard. There was a way she did it—a thing above and beyond the fact that she was untrained and a puppy. It was a way that went back a long way to an ancient greatness. There are no precise words to describe it. And still, I knew then, it was a thing that any man who knew dogs could never miss. Suddenly I felt a great deal older, and a great deal wiser.

Two more pheasant rose; the field was rich with them. And out there was a good dog, that after proper training would honor any shoot. And out there was another dog that was the raw stuff of greatness. There was the young, small shadow of Danny the Red out there; a hundred youngsters could have been working with her and knowing eyes would have followed none but her.

Then I turned and the Judge was beside me, not five feet away. His eyes were bright and years had gone from his face. "Look," I said, "look at that dog." She was going on now, through the corn, taking it swiftly but thoroughly, covering it all as surely as a blanket covers a bed. "Look!" and now my voice was high-pitched, almost a scream. "Danny the Red was like that—I only saw him once but I know now. There was a man showed me—a man who was handling him at the trial last year." And I said again at the end, there being nothing else to say, "Look!"

The Judge smiled and breathed deeply. Back a little way Forest's voice said, "What damn foolishness is this?" and the Judge acted as if he had not heard it. The Judge said to me softly, "I remember—it's almost like Danny over again. And which dog of the two is it?"

I said, almost whispering, "I don't know." Then I raised my voice, appalled at my own conviction. "But it has to be the one with the blackest chest!"

"Which one," the Judge muttered to himself and then the dog turned toward us. Her chest was very black.

The Judge nodded to the deputy and he went after the dogs. The Judge and I walked back together to Forest, who stood a little away from my father and uncle. "You saw it, Mr. Forest," the Judge said. "The boy knew. It took him to make me see, even,

and I've spent more of my life with Springers than a sane man would. I'm glad I'm not that sane, however, which is beside the point. She's Danny's girl."

Forest's face was flushed. His cigar had gone out. He cleared his throat and made a wide gesture. "And you're a Judge!" he said. "A lawyer, and you call that evidence. I'd like to know what a higher court would say."

"Oh, it would say it wasn't evidence," the Judge said. "If you want an appeal it's your right."

Forest looked away and I knew what he was thinking. He might win a case on appeal where only the cold, unseeing letter of the law would apply, and it would be the emptiest victory any man ever won. For in the county the people would know and they would hate and despise him. They would know him for a dog thief and if the law backed up his theft it could not make him less the criminal in the eyes of those who knew the truth.

The Judge's eyes were on Forest. "Well, Forest, what is your decision?"

Forest looked at the Judge, then turned his eyes for a fleeting moment on my uncle and my father. When he spoke his voice was faltering, an old man's voice. "A man can make a mistake," he said. "An honest mistake. Something happened to those tags—I don't know what, but that was the trouble. And if I'm wrong I'm the first to admit it and say I'm sorry. Anyone can make a mistake." He paused, his voice still on a rising note, and looked again around the little circle. The eyes that met his own were level and impassive. He made a little gesture with his left hand, turned and walked rapidly toward his buggy.

The judge smiled, but there was no laughter in the eyes that followed Forest's progress across the field. "He forgot his dog," he said. "One of the boys can take her to his place. Anybody want a ride back with me? I'm going to town and wind this case up officially."

"I guess Ned will be going with us," my father said, and left.

The deputy brought the lovely bitch over and gave my uncle her lead. The three of us stood in a little circle looking down at her. I knelt and ran my hand gently along her back, and her warm wet tongue touched my cheek.

"You know," my uncle said, "I've been thinking."

"About time," my father said sarcastically. "That'll be news to the whole family."

"Shut up," my uncle said good-humoredly. "I've been thinking about two things. First, I guess I sort of owe the boy here an apology."

"Me?" I said, startled.

"Yes. I sort of had the idea you might turn out to be—well, not up to scratch the way I'd like. Shows how wrong a man can be. I know better now, and so does your father."

Hot blood surged up into my face, and I felt a happiness greater than I'd known in all my life.

"And the second thing I've been thinking. Well—I haven't the time a man should give to a dog like this. I've got an awful lot of work piled up at the place. I'd like to see her belong to a man who'd really bring her up the way she deserves."

I felt suddenly as if I'd been slapped hard. "You mean—you are going to sell her?"

My uncle shook his head. "Couldn't do that. The truth is, I was thinking—oh, hell—" he thrust the lead toward me. "Take her. And you make her into the best pheasant dog this county ever saw or I'll skin you alive."

I looked at him with unbelieving eyes. I tried to speak and failed, I said feebly, "Gee—thanks—"

"Never mind," he barked. "My return will be what you make of her. And remember what I said I'd do if you let us down, me and her. And never think I don't mean it."

The Legless Bullfighter

by Marcos A. Spinelli

Almirante antonio cassado was a Portuguese giant who had come into Matto Grosso to try his fortune in the diamond fields of Sao Pedro. But fortune never quite smiled fully upon him. It continued to grin at him from one corner of its mouth. That was why the giant's honesty rebelled one day and he stole and hid a rather large diamond under his tongue.

His partners disliked his action. And the giant had to knife his way through them all to prevent them from chopping off his left ear: it being the preliminary punishment meted out to a first offender in the diamond fields in Matto Grosso.

He fled into the jungle. But as he was still being pursued he crossed the border and took refuge in El Chaco in the Indios territory. Here his mind found peace and his left ear went on flapping beside his head.

Now the virgins of the tribe liked him and graciously fought among themselves for the privilege of sharing his hammock. But the giant, true to his Christian upbringing, selected Konoru from among the contestants and made her his lawful woman. Later he fell in love with her. For Konoru was a thoughtful fourteen-year-old woman with a glistening rubber-like body and a soothing giggle. In due time Jose Olimpo Cassado was born. He first saw light of the moon one night right on the Bolivian-Brazilian border. For here it was that Konoru was caught with sudden labor pains so severe that she fell off her mule and gave birth to him. This fact accomplished, the giant gathered mother and newborn in his arms, hoisted himself into the saddle and rode on deeper into Brazil.

From his father Jose inherited abnormally large hands and shoulders. From his giggling little mother he stole a tendency to make his what was someone else's. And so by the time he was ten his halfbreed body was twenty years strong and already crisscrossed by countless scars inflicted upon him by his victims. But whipping, kicking, blows with machete flats only stirred his indignation and sharpened his tendency.

"Ai," he complained to his little mother as she nursed his cuts

after a beating, "those sons of juiceless bitches have done this to me."

"Ai, my son."

At twelve he fell in love with a two-year-old mule and courted her for months. But besides caressing her and babytalking to her he was unable to persuade her to follow him quietly. The mule's foam-white head and deep chest and steely legs haunted and ruined his sleep.

"Ai, senhora," he moaned broken-hearted to his little mother, "what can I do?"

She sighed, and thought a while.

"Ai, son," she said, "try under the moon what you fail to do under the sun, what say?"

"Ai!"

The sun dived beyond the serra and night rushed in without discernible transition. Jose sneaked into the corral where the mule was sleeping, stroked her to consciousness, baby-talked to her, slipped the lasso around her neck and—two shots rang out and two bullets whispered hurriedly past his ear to run for his life.

"Ai, senhora, a son of a juiceless bitch has done this to me," he said dejectedly as his mother sucked his bullet-clipped ear.

"Ai, my son, be patient," she consoled him. "You are too young, yet, I think."

"Ai."

He grew up so fast and so much that at fourteen he had the hands and shoulders of his gigantic father whom he despised as much as he loved his mother for whom he faced any risk and rode any distance so long as he could bring her a token of his filial love. Light-heartedly he would ride weeks on end through the jungle to the mission to steal holy pictures and candles—particularly colored candles with which she loved to grease her hair. And once, in exchange for a bullet in the thigh, he brought her a beautiful poncho he had gently jerked away from under a sleeping wayfarer.

But the time came when his mother's giggle vanished and her childish Indian face was filled with darkest apprehension: for some time now he hadn't brought her anything. Yet he had been to a fair and twice to the mission. Apparently he preferred to spend his time in restless meditation as though he were arguing with himself as to his future.

"Ai," she sighed, "why have you stopped being a good son to me?"

"Ai, senhora, I've been thinking, I think. I can't be bothered with small things no more. I am a man now. I have decided to be a horse trader, what say?"

"Ai," she cried happily, and once again the vanished giggle returned to light her face.

And so Jose became a horse thief.

At sixteen Jose was already a notoriously lucky horse thief and still a whole halfbreed. Then, overnight, he became a half man: a man without legs. For he made the unpardonable mistake of lassoing a colt in the presence of its mother. She neighed the alarm—a swarm of bullets answered her call—Jose stumbled away with his legs shot to pieces.

A sad sight was he squatting in front of his waddle-house under the sun as the mosquitoes attacked his still bleeding bare stumps wrapped up in strips of his own flesh, his fever-enameled eyes deep and stony in his pain-welted face as his powerful hands fingered the earth feelinglessly. Beside him squatted his little mother, silent and desolate, sharing his dishonor.

For many days he lay under the sun stupefied with fever. And for many nights he fought and shouted deliriously in his mother's thin arms as the underbrush creatures kept respectful vigil outside the camp fires. As she rocked his huge limp half body she sang Indian prayers. She sang white men's prayers. She sang her own songs. She sang with her breast and arms on fire because his body was burning with malignant fever. And so throughout the nights she sang her son alive. She sang death away. But one night death caught her mute and sneaked into her son. Feeling his head slump over her shoulder and his body grow cold in her arms she turned him moonward, fanned the fire around him, and began to scream and pray and dance death out of her son's body.

The cauterizations healed. His eyes lost their painted and stony look and suffering relented its grip from his face. Soon his powerful hands were busy weaving reins, lassos, whips. And smilingly he began to trapeze his half body on his strong arms as he moved about. Helped by his little mother he began his education all over again. Again he learned how to keep the saddle. And presently he was riding as well as ever. But his humiliation knew no limit when he was forced to ask someone to help him into the saddle. Rather than

do that, however, he would lead the horse to a hogback or to an ant-mound or between deep furrows and thus gain the saddle—unaided.

One day the sun rose to find his little mother not by his side. A few weeks later she reappeared riding a horse whose mane almost touched the ground. She was thinner and looked smaller. She had the face of an old woman. But now again she giggled happily. He giggled back, understandingly. He frogleaped to the horse, grabbed the mane and catapulted himself into the saddle—unaided, before his neighbors' curious eyes.

"Ai, senhora," he said, "I want live no longer where my legs are buried. I go, senhora. Adeus."

"Adeus, meu filho."

He slapped the horse's ears and galloped away deeper into the jungle. He left his mother for mother jungle. He wanted to free himself from the searching and questioning eyes of those who had seen him helpless and humiliated. Of those who had ceased respecting him, that is ceased fearing him. It was the fear of not being feared that forced him to desert his little mother and hide in the bosom of the jungle where, free from the persecution of human eye, he patiently and painfully trained his arms to take the place of his legs and where he developed a thousand fighting tricks which made him a much more dangerous man than he had hitherto been.

A jungle-faced, gorilla-bodied man was Jose when several years later he galloped into the settlement of Capin Branco one day at sunset. Across his powerful sweating bare chest lay his rifle, and a machete with a monkey tail at the handle kept guard on his back. His revolver butt shone white against his halfbreed belly. Perched in the saddle a trifle backward, his empty trouserlegs flapping against the horse's flanks like wings, he shouted savagely as he galloped around the square.

Presently he reined in before a hut and asked for food. He was invited to come in. He filled himself to the throat and drank himself into seeing flames leaping before his eyes. Thus charged he was about to frog-leap out of the hut when the host asked him to pay for what he had consumed. Pay? Whence he came nobody paid for anything. Money? He had no money. The host reached for . . . Jose dropped on his back and opened fire. Then he hurled himself out of the hut. With hands and teeth he hoisted himself into the saddle and, his brain still wandering through alcoholic infernos and his blood coursing in his veins like a mouse under a carpet, he

roamed in and out of the settlement roaring for a mate till he found and fell upon her from the saddle.

"Ay Ay, woman, what say?"

"Ay, man!"

He settled in Capin Branco. He made a living by selling whips and lassos and reins and horse-girths which he himself wove, and by closing horse deals. His workmanship was good, his price to the customers' liking, his knowledge of horses reliable, and he himself a likable ruffian. He might have spent his life in peace, enjoying everybody's fear and respect, had he not fallen in love with Perdida.

She was a beautiful mulatto. An independent spitfire who lived alone in a hut on the outskirt of the settlement. She made a living by weaving hammocks which she sold at the fairs. He wanted her and told her so—she called him a legless to his face and he—he marveled why he hadn't killed her. He trailed her—she evaded him—till one day he finally cornered her. His whip swished in the air, coiled around her ankles, brought her down—he knocked the knife out of her hand and indifferent to her struggle and deaf to her shouts was about to take her when the hoop of a lasso haloed his head for a second and then closed around his neck. Lying on his back within a fence of horses' hoofs and surrounded by grinning horsemen he gave no sign of life till he felt his strength come back to him then—rolling on his back he emptied his revolver and rifle point-blank into his executioners. A cloudburst of fire rained upon him. Turning on his belly he unsheathed his machete and scythed down as many ankles as came within his reach. He carved his way to his horse, catapulted himself into the saddle and, streaming with blood, galloped away—

Sunrises and sunsets came up and went down through rainy and dry reasons as life in the jungle flowed on in a turbulent torrent of monotony. Playing hide-and-seek with beasts and men and bullets alike Jose galloped through Matto Grosso. And the four winds never ceased carrying the news of his feats to every hut in and out of men's way. Jose the Legless had entered his name in blood in the legend-steeped ledger of the Matto Grossonee jungle.

Under the cleft-mouthed sun pouring molten light on the red-dusty road which crossed Matto Grosso Jose was riding to Las Vargen to the fair—or rather to the bullfighting which would close the festivities. His legless linen trouserlegs waved at the sides of the horse like white wings, and his huge brimmed hat slapped on the back of his head threw a disk-shaped shadow on his gorilla-sloping

shoulders. Lax in the saddle, leaning a trifle backward, hands together holding the reins against his chest, and elbows flapping outside, he sang in time to the horse's lope.

"Vamos morena vamos,
Vamos embora,
Vamos para o sertão
Vamos menu coração . . ."

As he sang his insulting black eyes surveyed lazily the compact green growth of the jungle pressing against the borders of the deserted and curvy road. Through the quivering molten light half naked men and women squatting on the thresholds of their waddle-houses looked like animated studies in mud—dried up, cracked mud. And through their parched lips a thread-like voice exchanged salutations with the rider.

"Bon dia, amigo, se Deus quizer."

"Good day, friends, if God wishes," Jose boomed in response. He rode on.

He urged Bonito to a gallop. And both rider and mount became one as they raced before a pursuing cloud of red dust.

He galloped into the fair grounds and rode his horse through crowds clustered before the stalls. As people jumped aside he deluged them with his roaring laughter. Men fingered their weapons, women swore at him, girls screamed. The children clapped their hands.

"Eiiiiii, Jose amigo," they shouted.

"Ay, meus amighinhos, make way."

Shouting and laughing his way clear Jose rode to the big wall-less hut on the farthest corner of the square. Here he leisurely slipped down from the saddle and swung his half body under the inverted V-shaped roof of the hut.

Accordions and guitars were playing a maxixe. Women and men and children dressed in their brightest holiday costumes squatted on the ground eating and drinking and smoking. In a clear space fenced with saddles and weapons and cooking-gear and wonder-eyed babies a dozen couples were dancing—perspiration-beaded faces, glowing eyes, sparkling teeth, taut bodies.

Jose paused for a moment to watch them and to spit a few salty remarks to some of the women, and then continued to that corner of

the hut where a long and wide board on two packmule saddles served as a bar.

He gulped down his first drink. And his second. His third one he began to sip, as his insulting eyes roamed about. Suddenly his nostrils quivered and his eyes narrowed, his teeth snapped close together and his chin stuck out like a mule's kick. He slipped his knife from his back to his belly-button, handle downward, ready for battle.

"A bottle of aguardiente," he called without turning his head. He pushed it into his shirt and, eyes spearing ahead, he trapezed himself through the crowd to a tough looking bunch of itinerant bullfighters entertaining a woman: Perdida!

"Ay, morena malvada," he whined half threateningly as his elbows spread out and he flapped beside her.

"Ay, caboco malvado," she said in a high-pitched voice that shook with restlessness.

He ignored the bullfighters.

"Riding alone?" he asked.

"No. Riding with men."

He bared his teeth good-naturedly. "Men?" And this time his insulting eyes picked up and pricked the bullfighters one by one.

The bullfighters' eyes pricked back.

"Drink," Jose said pushing the bottle under her nose.

"I don't drink your drinks."

"Whose drinks are you drinking today? *Boiadeiros?*" He chewed the word *cowhand* as if it were a stringy piece of meat. He tore at it with all his contempt. He slobbered over it.

"Ay, horse rider," said one of the bullfighters intentionally fanning the simmering quarrel. "How long does a mare's pregnancy last?"

Again Jose bared his teeth. "It all depends, amigo cowhand," he whined innocently. "It all depends whether it is boy or stallion who mounts her. If it is a boy, a bullfighter is born, what say?"

"A whole bullfighter?"

Jose snarled, grinned, moved about—racking his brain for an answer, for an answer he must give or fight or be shamed before the watching Perdida.

"Drink," he snarled pushing the bottle under the bullfighter's nose. "Drink, amigo cowhand. A man never refuses a drink. If he does—he's no man, what say?"

The bullfighter looked at him motionlessly.

"What say?"

"I drink."

"Ay."

But the bullfighter also had no intention of being shamed before a woman.

"Ay, horse rider, have you ever looked into the eyes of a bull from behind a red cape?" he said as his eyes stuck to Jose's waist line.

"No," Jose snapped back. "I don't like the eyes of a bull. I like to look into men's left eyes before shooting them out their heads, what say?"

"Ay," the bullfighter said, "that's nothing—"

"That's nothing," Perdida shouted looking at Jose. "That's nothing—even a legless can do that, what say?"

Jose turned to the bullfighters.

"They tell me that Pinto the bull is a killer, is that true?"

"It is," they boasted in unison.

He turned to Perdida then and, looking at her with the steady eyes of the dead, he said, "What will you give me if I look into Pinto's eyes from behind a red cape?"

"Anything—anything, you legless halfbreed. Anything, for he'll gore you through and through, you legless halfbreed."

"If I look into Pinto's eyes tomorrow afternoon will you come with me dog-like?"

She stared back at him, eyes glowing sullenly with challenge, respect and hatred, and passion.

"I will. I'll come with you dog-like, you damned legless halfbreed. I'll come."

"Bon," Jose said quietly.

Again he turned to the bullfighters.

"I'll look into Pinto's eyes before you espada him tomorrow, what say?"

The bullfighters grinned contemptuously.

"Tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow."

"In the ring?"

"In the ring."

"But how?"

"Wait till tomorrow."

Perdida's cobra-like stare was provoking him. But he refused

to meet the challenge now. She began to breathe hard through her nose and, to hide her storming inside, she burst out in strident laughter.

In death-like composure he waited for her to be finished with her fit. And then he said, "Have your saddlebag ready for tomorrow afternoon. We ride on soon after I have looked into Pinto's eyes, what say?"

She stared at him—

Night came and the jungle was studded with camp-fires around which people ate and drank, danced and quarreled, and made love. Dawn: a world teeming with unconscious life. Then the sun rose and rode to midday. And there it paused implacably beating down on the crowded bullring. Whenever bull or fighter succumbed to the other's blow the crowd erupted deliriously.

Manco had killed one bull. One bull had gored Ignacio. The crowd was drunk with life and death when Jose riding Benito pranced into the ring. Beside Jose on foot ran an Indian boy carrying a wooden stool about fifteen inches high. He placed it in the center of the ring.

Waving his hand and grinning coldly Jose trotted around the ring a few times, his empty trouserlegs streaming beside the horse's flanks. The crowd unleashed their emotion. It rose skyward like a bursting rocket. Motionless Perdida sat in the front row. Unblinkingly she met Jose's eyes. He led the horse to the center of the ring, stopped and saluted, slipped to the ground, and trapezed himself onto the stool. He held a short conversation with the Indian boy who kept nodding his head vigorously till Jose dismissed him.

Calmly Jose unrolled a red kerchief from his waist and waved it to the crowd—

"Pronto?" called a bullfighter from the bull's pit.

"Vamos."

Like a hurricane Pinto charged into the ring, keeping to his right till, skidding with his foreleg, he swerved to the left and followed his own impulse till he came to an inquiring stop. His great head down, the hump of his muscles on his neck throbbing violently, he hoofed the ground, quivering,—quivering, trembling and shaking.

Jose rose the red kerchief to his eyes and called to the bull—the bull raised his head and his body began to tremble as if shocked by electricity. Puffing he began to back up very very slowly as if

pushed back by a stronger power than himself till, leaving the ground for a second, he snorted and charged in a cloud of red dust. In an instant his spiky horns disappeared through the kerchief—but when his head came up again Jose was solidly sitting between his horns. Mystified, the bull began shaking his head, so violently that he fell to his fore-knees. But soon he stood again and, foaming, started out on a blind gallop through the ring.

Perdida sat motionlessly.

As the bull came flying beside the ring-fence Jose shouted, "Vamos, meninho."

Immediately the Indian boy's head peeped over the fence. He nodded and disappeared. And reappeared holding a red cape against the fence. The bull saw it and charged it—the impact was terrific. The crash filled the air. Stunned the bull fell back to his hindlegs. For a second Jose was seen sailing over the fence and smoothly fall into scores of expectant arms—

Her saddlebag slung over her shoulder Perdida was waiting for Jose where the road ended and the jungle began. He came trotting to her leisurely. He reined in beside her. Their eyes met. His glowed. Hers narrowed. Suddenly he bent down and stuck his hand between her breasts. Grinning contemptuously he looked at the knife he had taken from her. And threw it away. Without word he then grabbed her by the wrists and hoisted her up behind him. He shook the reins. The horse moved on. They entered the jungle. Again he reined in, and turned back in the saddle. Their eyes met. His were calm, devoid of any malice or passion. They shone honestly in his scarred half-breed face. Hers were burning.

"What say?" she hissed.

He shook his head.

"Go your way," he said calmly. "I don't want you—no, not dog-like. Go."

Fire left her eyes and blood her face. She couldn't stand his honest eyes. She bowed her head. She listened to her feelings. She hated him. She loved him. She despised him. She wanted him. He was a bully. He was a good man. He was a man.

"Ride on," she said quietly. "I'll follow you woman-like."

Money on Morgan

by Robert Westerby

We stood around behind the pits, Danny and I, waiting for Morgan to arrive. It was hot, and the sun bounced off the boards and the white paint and made us sizzle. I could feel the sweat running coldly down my back between my shoulder blades.

Danny looked at his watch. "He'll have to be here soon," he said. "He's late anyway."

"Maybe he knows what he's doing," I said. "Morgan's no fool."

Danny just looked at me. "Think so?" he said. "I hope you're right."

I began looking round. Most of the other machines were being wheeled out onto the track now, and the Stands were nearly filled up. They would be starting the first race in just ten minutes, and Morgan was cutting it fine.

I watched the boys in the next pit. They had the motor started and were blipping it up. The exhaust note was harsh, like tearing calico. And the air filled with the stinking blue smoke that went up your nose and into your mouth until you could taste it. The driver was sitting on the edge of the pit swinging his legs. He was a little, Italian-looking man with enormous hands.

Danny tapped me on the arm. "Here he is," he said. "Here's Morgan."

I looked round. Morgan was walking along behind the pits towards us. He had his overalls on and was doing up the belt round his waist. He grinned at me, and then looked at Danny. Looking at me seemed to be the best.

"Where you been?" Danny said. "What you think you're doing?"

Morgan tried to look surprised. He was a little guy, and very tough. His face was always brown, and his hair so black it was nearly blue. A lot of people thought he was colored, but he wasn't. They said that, with Patello, he was the best driver in the country.

"Listen; you got to watch yourself, Morgan," Danny said. "We're not paying you money to kick around. Where you been?"

Morgan scowled. "I got held up coming out," he said. "I left in plenty of time. You don't need ever to worry about me, anyway."

"Oh, we don't? Well, that's fine," Danny said. "Listen; you better slow down on your night life, kid. The Boss don't like you playing around the way you do, see? You get good money, and you got to earn it the way we like."

"And when we say 1:30 at the Track, we mean just that, see kid?" I said.

Morgan grinned. He never minded me.

The mechanics were pushing up our car now, and we turned to look at it. It was long and slim, with black paint and silver wheels. It looked pretty good in the sunshine, and pretty wicked.

"How's it going now?" Danny asked Morgan.

Morgan looked sideways at him. "Going okay. We got that oiling-breather working properly now," he said.

"Good. We can't afford another slip-up," Danny said. "Not today."

"Going to win it, kid?" I said.

Morgan grinned. "Sure. I'll win it. Patello's going well, though."

"How well?" Danny said. "We don't want no mistakes, I told you."

"You don't have to worry," Morgan said. "I'll win it!"

We watched him put on his helmet and climb into the seat. When the mechanic was in there with him they began talking and not looking at us any longer. He didn't even answer when I shouted good-luck at him.

"Come on," Danny said. "We better go."

We pushed through the crowd and went up the stairs into the Stand. There was a lot of people, and more noise.

We had to search a bit until we found the Boss, and by the time we were in the seats there wasn't long to go.

The Boss was sitting beside a little guy in a grey suit and hat. He introduced the man as Mr. Rogers.

"Hullo, Mister Rogers," I said. "Glad to know you."

Rogers just nodded. He was a thin little weasel with a wrinkled face, and thick glasses. He had a diamond pin in his tie.

"What the hell was Morgan doing?" the Boss asked Danny.

"Said he was held up," Danny said. "I guess he's just careless."

"He say anything about the race to you?" the Boss asked me.

"Sure he did. Says he'll win it. Says it's in the bag," I said.

The Boss nodded. "Fine," he said. "I thought I got it weighed up. He ought to win it, all right. That's a swell bus he's driving."

"There's Patello, though," Danny said. "Morgan says he's going well."

"Yeah, I don't like Patello," the Boss said slowly. "I don't like him. But I don't think he'll do it today. Reilly says our car's perfect."

Rogers tapped my arm. "What's all this?" he said. "Your boy think he'll win?"

I nodded. "Sure. He'll win it. It's in the bag."

The Boss was listening to what we were saying. "Mr. Rogers is talking about buying a share in the car," he said. "But he wants to see today's clean-up first," he said, and we laughed, watching Rogers' face. Rogers didn't laugh.

The bell was going now, and the cars were wheeled out into line. There were six of them. King was in One; Jimmy Klein in Two; Patello in Three; Morgan in Four. On the outside were two boys from the other coast. They were boys we didn't know much about. Against the bright red of Patello's car, our crate's black and silver looked pretty good.

The crowd gave the boys quite a hand when they were lined up. There must have been fifteen thousand people there. It was so hot that most of them had their coats off, making a blur of white all round the Track.

"What are they betting our boy?" the Boss asked.

"Two's," Danny said. "It'll shorten."

"Not it," Rogers said. "Patello's carrying all the clever money."

The Boss smiled. "We'll soon see whose is the clever money," he said. "Just you wait."

Rogers shrugged his thin shoulders. "Hope you're right," he said. "I got three hundred on, and I don't like losing," he said.

Danny nudged the Boss. "They're away now," he said.

We all sat up, watching them. They were rolling round the Track, keeping roughly in line. It was to be a rolling start. The race was over Ten Laps.

They kept quite steady in line, the whole six of them. Quite steady. And we watched silently until they came down the straightaway where the Starter was waiting for them.

The flag dropped first time, and they were off.

Danny pulled his hat off, and yelled. "He's there!" he yelled out.

All around us in the Stand people were shouting, but Danny's voice is something awful and you could hear him way above the din.

The cars went down the straight and into the first turn. Morgan was there, about two lengths up on Patello. He went wide into the turn, and then dived down. His tail wagged a bit, and the back wheels cut into the dirt. Halfway round he had cut across the others and was on the inside for the back straight. And as they came past the Stands at the end of the lap he was four lengths clear.

I looked at the Boss. But he was a dead-pan, and showed nothing. Rogers was leaning forward in his seat. Danny was glaring down at the Track like a crazy man. He bet very heavy, Danny did —sometimes too heavy, and he was a tough loser.

As the cars went onto the curve again, Patello moved up a bit, and on the back straight he passed Morgan and got in front. They came past the stands at the end of that lap, and Patello was still leading.

The crowd was going crazy the whole time. In the next five laps it was Patello; Morgan; Patello; Morgan; Patello. There weren't two lengths in it the whole way. Patello's crate was very fast and always pulled out on the straights but on every curve Morgan caught him. He would go in low, pushing his tail up a bit, cutting a great fan of dirt from his back wheels the whole way round as he fought the skid. The strain on his wrists must have been appalling, but he seemed to be holding the crate to an inch all the time. I never saw it done better.

When they came past us for the eighth time, Morgan was just in front. He was sitting bolt upright in the seat, his arms almost stiffly held out in front of him holding the wheel. Reilly, who was there with him, didn't look as if he thought it were funny in any way at all, but Morgan was grinning.

"By God! that boy's all right," Rogers said. "I never seen this stuff done better by anyone."

The Boss didn't say anything. His fist was punching up and down on his knee the whole time, and I knew he was getting worried. He had a lot of money on Morgan.

On the back stretch Patello gave it the gun and took the lead again. He was a fine driver, and doing all he knew. The rest of the field was nowhere, and one of the boys from the other coast had dropped out.

They went into the last lap.

In front of our Pit one of the mechanics was waving a big board at Morgan, dancing up and down at the edge of the track. Reilly waved his arm as he went past, but Morgan took no notice. Patello was still in front, about four lengths up.

They went round the curve nose to tail, Morgan higher up than usual. Half-way round Morgan dived down and got clear. Patello wagged a bit, and on the back stretch Morgan was in front of him, going like a scalded dog. His exhaust note seemed half-a-tone higher.

They went into the last curve almost together, and the whole crowd stood up screaming at them. Patello had let Morgan get outside him for the first time, and didn't seem to like taking it low. They went up together, and it looked certain they must touch. But somehow Morgan kept clear, and kept his head. He dived off the bank onto the straightaway leading by a length—just like in the movies.

"He'll do it," I yelled out. "He'll do it . . . do it . . . Look! Look! Look!"

Danny threw his hat right in the air and grabbed the Boss by the arm. "He's done it. He's won," he said.

The cars roared over the line almost together. It was a lulu, as tight a finish as you could want to see.

I looked sideways at the Boss for a second, but he had jumped up, his eyes staring. Down there at the end of the straightaway people had started to scream.

Morgan and Patello were right close together, and Morgan was still on the outside, where the other boy liked to be. They were slowing now, but still moving plenty fast as they reached the curve.

As he ran up towards the wall, Morgan looked round. Patello was rattled, and sliding a bit, and his front wheel touched Morgan's. Then things happened.

They swung apart, bouncing like golf balls. Patello slewed round twice, missing the rest of the cars by inches and a miracle. He lurched down to the inside edge, banged into the kerb, and stopped dead. But Morgan went on up and hit the wall. His off-side front wheel snapped off almost at once, and the car skidded round as the axle dropped. Reilly kept down and hung on tight, and though Morgan was flung out his leg got caught somehow. And he got dragged. He got dragged for thirty yards, until the crate turned over. Reilly was thrown clear and wasn't hurt, but when the thing caught fire Morgan couldn't get free. He never had a chance, I tell

you. He never had a chance. Maybe you never saw a man die that way. And, if you haven't, you can believe me you don't want to. Because it isn't pretty.

We all stood there watching it, and we could do nothing. Everyone was screaming and yelling, and the black smoke and the stink poured across the whole place, like a fog.

And as I stood there I thought about young Morgan; about the way he drove, sitting upright in the car; the way he grinned when he spoke to me, never minding what I said. He was about twenty-three years old. It was pretty terrible to think about it, because, goddam it, he was only a kid . . .

When we went back to Town in the Boss's big Buick Danny drove, and I sat in the back with the Boss. He was slouched down in the corner of the seat, staring out the window. And we went a long way without anybody speaking a word.

Then I said: "It's no good worrying, Boss. I know how you feel. So does Danny. It was a God-awful thing to happen. We all know that. But it's no good going on thinking about it."

He turned his head and just looked at me. Then he laughed in a sour sort of way.

"Sure, sure," he said. "I don't have to worry. Oh no! Rogers scrams off with his offer—*that's* nothing! You're telling *me* it was a God-awful thing to happen! Do you think I'm crazy? Why, that car set me back ten thousand dollars—and what's it now? A heap of burned-out junk. And so I don't have to go on thinking about it, eh?" he said. "Ten thousand bucks—and a dead loss! What's the matter with you guys? Can't you *imagine how I feel?*"

After the Altitude Record

by Lion Feuchtwanger

At 10:30 a.m., July 2nd—an extremely hot day—Lieutenant Victor Crecy took off in an attempt to break the world's altitude record of 11,702 meters. The maximum altitude attainable for airplanes had been mathematically computed. But no one knew how high the human body could go with physiological safety. Man represented an unknown quantity, and despite many laboratory experiments, no reliable equation had been worked out.

Slowly Lieutenant Crecy's plane, *Marie Lemaire* (S A III 26), spiraled upwards into the rarefied upper strata of the atmosphere, a windy, tempestuous region churned constantly by a violent east gale which sweeps along the lower rim of the stratosphere. The horizon climbed upwards at the same gradual rate as the plane until at length it faded from sight.

Lieutenant Crecy took the ascent with deliberate slowness, aware that somewhere along his route lay that dread point where the human body, its pressure greater than that of the area surrounding it, must burst—literally burst. This area was the stratosphere. Like a gigantic vampire it lay in wait, menacing and inevitable. It was ready to draw every particle of air from the cells of the human body and to suck the last drop of blood through the skin.

Although it seemed to take an eternity, Lieutenant Crecy reached the icy void of extreme altitude before long. A few clouds rushed past the solitary aviator; a driving blizzard, coming from nowhere and going nowhere, swept by. The controls quivered from the strain of ascent. Save for the tiny indicators on his instruments, the aviator saw nothing. Long before this, cities had shrunk to pinpoints and vanished; rivers had diminished to the size of wires and had disappeared. There was no sound except for the motors. There was nothing in that void except Lieutenant Crecy and his plane.

Lieutenant Crecy was thirty-eight years old; twice he had been cited for valor in the World War by the French War Department. He had his heart set on breaking the altitude record and expected to bring back as trophies the instruments that filled the cockpit. These instruments had been sealed up at Paris headquar-

ters to preclude possible skepticism as to the authenticity of the readings. The young lieutenant knew his business. He was well-prepared for the stratosphere as a result of twelve previous high-altitude flights and much laboratory work. He knew all about the dazzling white mid-summer sun which beats down upon one so mercilessly because the rarefied air affords no protection against it. He knew all about the fearsome winter that prevails when it is summertime upon the earth.

Lieutenant Crecy was bundled from head to foot in furs and had on heavy fur gloves. A protective coat of grease was spread thickly over his face. He had a monocle pinched in his left eye and both eyes were covered by a pair of goggles.

Despite these precautions the wind cut him to the bone like a saw. Blisters cropped out on his face under the fierce blaze of the sun. The intense cold contracted the metal parts of his plane and several pieces snapped off like brittle slate. Breathing through the little tube in his mouth that led to the oxygen supply, he looked as if he were puffing away at a pipe.

At an altitude of 9,000 to 9,500 meters, a feeling of elation came over Lieutenant Crecy. Was he not one of the first living creatures to push so far out into the universe? Lieutenant Crecy was a brave young man. There had been savage hand-to-hand fights in the war and once he had crashed into No Man's Land and lain there helpless between trenches and barb-wire entanglements with shrapnel kicking up the dirt around him. But all that was a thing of the past. He was on a fresh adventure.

His lean, immobile face—friends were wont to call him "hatchet face"—was the kind photographers like to take; to millions of folks it symbolized the courage and daredeviltry of the younger generation.

But then, at an altitude of 10,300 meters, this face suddenly convulsed. Spasmodically it began twitching under the layer of grease. The mouth opened and shut, helpless and uncontrolled, again and again.

Lieutenant Crecy heard the drone of the motors no longer; the sun became a blur; his tongue and gums were parched and burned fiercely. Darkness closed in—soon it would be night. The young man started talking to himself—which he had never done before in his life.

"10,982 meters above sea level . . ." he said. "Why . . . my

mother never used to have black hair . . . it was brown. I've been up 2900 hours already and here I'm only 11 meters . . . A steak, please! Funny how the time flies . . . just a minute ago it was 29 and now it's 92 . . . funny . . ."

Then he could think no more. Just as the last bit of consciousness was ebbing away, just as an overwhelming blaze of sunlight was flooding over him in curious, writhing convulsions, his bedimmed eyes saw a gauge. His oxygen tank was empty! Automatically he reached for the reserve tank. Pulling himself together with all his might, he repeated over and over again an intense command: "Keep your head . . . keep your head . . ." The engulfing sunshine receded. The sun came back into focus. The motors purred as they had before. The hunger pangs were gone.

Lieutenant Crecy looked at his altimeter. It registered 11,404 meters. The Lieutenant took the next 100 meters boldly.

Then, apparently for no reason whatsoever, the *Marie Lemaire* started balking. It jumped its course, it lurched and it plunged as if it had lost its rudder.

A cold shudder—colder than the chill of the icy vacuum about him—went through Lieutenant Crecy. For a ghastly thought had struck him. What if the oxygen gave out and he could not beat John Macready's 11,702 meter mark!

A minute seemed like another eternity now. Before long he was again gasping. He could feel his heart pounding. He was fighting for air. He told himself that he really could not be in serious danger yet. But there were so many fish swimming all around with such glassy staring eyes.

Meanwhile he was conscious that his plane was flying at an extremely high altitude and that there was something definitely wrong. He was certain though, that whatever was wrong, it would not be hard to adjust. Just pressing a button or something like that would do the trick.

But he couldn't quite figure out what to do. There were so many fish swimming around getting in the way.

There—he had it! Something ought to be done about that middle lever. Vaguely he raised his hand. Away darted the stick, spinning madly about. Where was the damned thing anyhow? Lieutenant Crecy could not find it. Apparently to drive away those pesky fish he pushed up his goggles.

Then he felt a twisting stab in his brain—nothing more after

that. The same day the *Marie Lemaire* (S A III 26) was found drifting on a body of water. Strange to say, it was hardly damaged. The dead Lieutenant was found sitting upright, his hand frozen to the steering gear. One of his eyes was frozen shut, the other held open by a monocle.

The altimeter, its seal unbroken, showed that Lieutenant Crecy had reached an altitude of 12,149 meters, thus breaking the previous record by 447 meters.

There Must Be a Losing Coach

by Samuel W. Taylor

WHEN the girl came into the lodge lobby, the State football squad was sitting around waiting out the hour until bedtime. They'd traveled halfway across the continent to play tomorrow's game and they were nervous but trying not to show it. According to all the dope, they'd win at a walk, but you never could tell. And the Wildcats would be pointing for them. In fact, it was known that the job of the Wildcat coach depended on winning this game. He'd shoot the wad against State.

But when the girl came into the lobby, the thirty-four State huskies for the moment forgot about the game; and even Coach Happy Hough, in the middle of telling something important to a reporter from the *Telegram*, trailed off. The reporter didn't notice it, for he'd also seen the girl. She stood just inside the doorway, oblivious of—or accustomed to—the open admiration, and slowly surveyed the faces of the squad.

Then she said, "Swede," and envious eyes turned to the tall end who got to his feet, face a dull, flushed red in contrast to straw-colored hair.

"Hello, Marta," he said, and crossed to her, automatically avoiding a foot stuck out to trip him.

They stood a moment together, and then she said, "I thought maybe you'd call."

"Been pretty busy." His eyes went to the floor. "We only got in yesterday. We had a workout, and there was a banquet last night, and then tonight Coach brought us out here to this lodge where we wouldn't be molested—I mean, where things would be quiet—"

"I know you've been busy," she said. "But I thought you might give us a ring." Her voice lowered. "Andy wants to see you."

He glanced over his shoulder, almost furtively. "It's almost bedtime," he said.

"You could be decent about it," she said, and added with a faint touch of scorn: "Or perhaps you think he'll try to bribe you?"

"Let's not go into things."

"Swede, you've hurt him terribly. He's still your father, you know. And you haven't even given him a ring."

"I'll ask Coach." Swede crossed to where Happy Hough was talking with the *Telegram* reporter.

"I'd like to go out for an hour, Coach."

Happy Hough glanced at the lobby clock. Four minutes to nine. "Be in by ten," he said. He didn't mean five after ten.

"Nothing can happen in an hour," the reporter said. He began laughing loudly, then sobered abruptly under Happy Hough's ice-blue gaze. The coach had got his nickname for the same reason fat men are called Tiny.

"Just like old times," the girl said as she drove Swede down the twisting canyon road. "A moon and a car and—us." The light touch came with an effort.

Swede said nothing. Looking backwards always hurt, and he didn't like to do it.

"How are you making out, Swede?"

"Okay."

"You're first-string end, I hear."

"Yes."

"That's nice going for a sophomore."

He said nothing, and she gave up trying to make conversation. A decrepit dine-dance spot had been wedged against the hillside where the canyon widened out briefly. Marta pulled up before it, and Swede followed her in. It was a dismal place with a low ceiling and dirty floor, and deserted but for the heavy-set man in the last of the three booths. He was a big man, florid, always a bit rumpled, hearty but with small bitter lines at his mouth corners when he wasn't smiling.

He was Andy Jones, coach of the team Swede had come half across the continent to play.

"Hello, Swede."

"Hello, Dad."

There was reserve in their smiles and handshakes, almost a caution, that each tried not to show. Swede saw that his father had changed in the year and a half since he'd last seen him. That had been in Texas, before Andy Jones got the head coaching position out here. He'd always been a big man, but now there was a certain looseness about him, as if he were beginning to sag under the pressure of twenty-odd years in the coaching grind. Twenty-odd years

can be a long time—high school coach, anonymous assistant in universities here and there and everywhere hoping and waiting for the big chance while the world forgot you were once All-American. And then last spring he'd finally got his bid for head coach—on a one-year contract. After all that waiting, he had to produce a winning team in one season, or drop back out of sight again. And he hadn't come through. This season his Wildcats had won two, tied one, and lost four. It was an open secret that he'd be thrown to the wolves unless the Wildcats won tomorrow's intersectional game with State.

"You're looking fine, Swede," Andy Jones said. Swede replied that he felt all right. Marta remarked about the weather and the three of them squeezed the last word out of that subject. It was stuffy and uncomfortable, and Swede had wanted to avoid it all. There was nothing he could say any more to his girl or his father, without bringing up the past, and that was all settled long ago.

The door of the place opened and slammed shut. A voice said, "A beer." Then, rising: "Hello, Andy! What bringeth thou? Are you—?" It died away.

Swede turned to see the reporter for the *Telegram* who'd been talking with Coach Happy Hough back at the lodge. The reporter was looking from Andy Jones to Swede and trying not to appear surprised.

"Hello," Andy Jones said. He nodded at Swede. "This is my boy."

"*Your* boy?"

"My *boy*. No; I'm not buying off the State players. Swede's my son."

"Oh, your *son*. Say!—that's a story! Father against son. And if the son's team wins—You don't mind if I use it, Andy?"

"Yes, I do mind. It's just a little cheap."

"Well, after all, Andy—somebody else would pick it up if I didn't. And where'd my job be?"

Andy Jones shrugged. He might have argued a year ago, but not now.

"Say, Andy, how come your boy's not playing for us instead of for State? How come—"

"Get out of here," Swede said, rising. "You've got your story, now get out of here."

"Well, sure, Swede," the reporter said hurriedly, backing away. "Sure. I was just leaving anyhow."

"I'm sorry this happened," Andy Jones said.

Swede shrugged. "It'll sell more tickets. I've got to go, Dad. It was nice seeing you again."

Driving up the twisting canyon road, the girl said, "You see how he's changed?"

"Yeah."

"Football did it to him. Do you understand why we wanted to keep you out of the game?"

Swede shrugged. "Dad's getting old, is all."

"He's forty-four. . . . If they'd given him a three-year contract —or even a two-year contract. What can a man do in one year? And if he fails now, how long will it be before he gets another chance as head coach? It isn't that he'll be out of a job. He's a good classroom man. Did you know they offered him a full professorship, back in Texas?"

"No."

"He turned it down for the one-year coaching contract here. Swede, he's got to win against your team tomorrow. He's got to have his chance."

Swede didn't say anything.

When she pulled up before the lodge they sat a few moments, awkwardly, in silence. He'd always kissed her goodnight after they'd been out together. At first teasingly, then seriously. She'd been sixteen when his father married her mother. During the trouble that made Swede leave home, Marta had taken his father's side, and that, he'd long ago decided, was that. But now as he looked at her in the moonlight the old feeling came welling up; and he abruptly got out of the car. No use starting that all over again.

"Maybe I'll see you again before we go," he said.

As he turned to the lodge she said, "Swede," and it took all the strength he had not to turn back to her.

He didn't sleep much that night. At ten the next morning the State squad had the last meal before the game. He didn't eat much. A bus took them around the city to take their minds off the game. A barker pointed out places of interest but nobody listened. The squad's wisecracks were strained, laughter too loud. The bus took them to the field house an hour before the game and they began getting into their equipment.

"Jones," Coach Happy Hough said to Swede, and motioned towards the showers. There was a moment of inaction as the squad

paused, eyes on Swede. "Break it up, boys!" the trainer bawled. "Don't forget we're playing football today!"

"You read the *Telegram* this morning?" the coach asked Swede at the shower room door.

"No; but I know what it said."

Coach Hough waited, icy-blue eyes steady. A successful coach can't be a soft man at any time.

"It makes a good story. It'll help the gate." And when Swede still didn't say anything: "I might have been told about a thing like that."

"I hoped it wouldn't come out." Swede took a deep breath. "Dad and I never got along. That's all. He didn't want me to play football. So I left home."

"He didn't want you to get hurt?"

"Not that, exactly." It was hard for Swede to put this into words. He'd never talked about it outside the family, and it seemed somehow a violation of good taste. "It's because I want to follow it up, and be a coach myself. Dad wanted me to be a doctor. He said that—well you know what the coaching game is, Coach."

Happy Hough nodded. "I know." He'd failed with his first chance, and spent sixteen years waiting for another. By the time he got the second chance, he'd learned how to be ruthless. "I know. One team always has to lose. And a coach always has to win." This was almost being garrulous for Happy Hough. "Your father's right, Jones."

"I know it; but that doesn't change anything."

Happy Hough nodded. "I know. You want to be All-American end, and then go on to coaching. You've got some ideas about the game. You've worked out some variations to my system. You don't like some of the things I do with my team. You're going to set the world on fire, when you're coach." Then as Swede's jaw clenched, Happy Hough smiled, a rare thing for him, and he put his hand on the boy's shoulder. "I'm not being sarcastic, Swede. I know."

He turned to three newspapermen coming in. One of them was the *Telegram* reporter, who asked, "Any change in the lineup, Coach?"

"Yes; Warbuck at right end."

The *Telegram* man glanced at Swede. "Instead of Jones?" He knew Swede played right end; there was no need of stating it. Happy Hough ignored the question.

As the game started, Swede sat with his chin in his big hands, watching from the bench. The Wildcat guards were charging too hard. Yes, Flint, State quarterback, called for a mousetrap play and ran the ball to first downs. Then as the guards stopped charging, Flint rifled a pass to Warbuck, playing Swede's position at right end. Warbuck got his hands on the ball and dropped it. Flint's passes had a lot of stinging pace and spin; but Swede had the knack of holding them. The Flint-to-Jones pass was already becoming famous, and Flint was also a sophomore. With two more years of competition, they'd both be All-American, if nothing happened. . . . Swede tried to pick out Marta's face in the sea of the Wildcat rooting section. She was there, but he couldn't see her. The crowd was good, thanks to the curiosity aroused by the *Telegram* article. Father *versus* son. The thing seemed cheaply melodramatic. . . . The Wildcats had the ball now, and the offense rolled. They had power. The fullback, Lincoln, was terrific, a coach's dream. But he didn't have precision blocking from the Wildcat line, and they lost the ball down in paydirt where the going got tough.

At the end of the half, Coach Hough gave brief advice about each position. He said to the quarterback: "Flint, they can be suckered. Watch out for Lincoln; he's a natural. But open up the trick stuff. They can be suckered." This was saying they weren't well coached, and Swede felt his face hot in a flush. Happy Hough did not look at him.

Except for Lincoln, the State trick stuff would have rolled in the third quarter. The Wildcat fullback was the coach's dream—the man who plays with some sixth sense, smelling out plays by instinct, leaving his position time after time, but always being in it when State passed into his territory. Late in the quarter he intercepted a pass and broke loose. The State safety man downed him deep in State territory. Held for three downs, the Wildcats place-kicked for three points, the first score of the game. Swede saw his father dancing like a boy at the Wildcat bench.

In the fourth quarter Warbuck dropped two more of Flint's stinging passes. Either one, if completed, would have meant a State score and would have put them in the lead. Swede found himself watching Andy Jones on the bench across the field. With another year, Andy Jones could polish his team up. He had material. With a chance, he might become another Warner or Sutherland—or even a Rockne.

"Jones!" Coach Hough barked. "Warm up!"

Swede ran up and down before the bench, bringing his knees high. The loudspeaker said, "Jones warming up for State," and then, in answer to the expectant hush from the crowd, it added that Jones was the son of the Wildcat coach. The crowd knew this, but wanted to hear it said. Coach Hough stood up, lean and solid and hard and tough, and Swede paused before him.

"How are you?" The ice-blue eyes were steady.

"Okay."

"Look, Swede." It was the first time the coach had called him by his nickname. "I don't want to put you in there today, but you can hang onto Flint's passes. Do you want to go in?"

"Yes," Swede said. He had no choice.

"It's only a game—but the game's like that. You understand?"

"Yes."

The coach spatted him on the rump and Swede ran onto the field, feeling tight inside. He'd never known before that Happy Hough's ice-blue eyes could be other than hard.

State made yardage as the Wildcats anticipated a pass. Then when the defense had pulled in, Flint called the seventy-one play. That was the Flint-to-Jones play, already becoming famous.

Swede dropped into position, counting for rhythm. The shift; flanker to the left. At the count of nine the ball snapped from center. Swede put a glancing block on the Wildcat tackle and drifted diagonally three steps to his left, then spurted to his right past the Wildcat back assigned to him on pass defense, catching the man flat-footed. Running downfield, he saw that Lincoln had smelled out the play and was cutting for him. Swede put on all the steam he had for thirty steps, and then looked back over his shoulder. The pass was leading him, and still high. Lincoln was alongside now. The ball had too much lead.

And then somehow, right then, everything seemed to freeze. The ball was motionless, seams showing. In this curious frozen moment, Swede wondered if he really should call on that reserve that always came to him in a pinch. It was a mysterious surge of energy that briefly lifted him above what he was capable of doing. It was this thing that had made him sure, deep inside, that he'd become All-American. But now in this moment his father was on the Wildcat bench, and the fate of that pass was the fate of his future.

His father was praying that Swede should miss that pass. Coach

Hough had put Swede in the game for the purpose of catching the pass. Swede hadn't stopped to realize fully until this moment just how hard and merciless the game of football was. He'd only known the rising fire within him that wouldn't be downed. He'd seen himself All-American, and going on to be another Warner or Sutherland—or perhaps even a Rockne. But he hadn't known there would be this moment.

He was still running; the ball was spinning; Lincoln was stride and stride with him. The ball was out of reach.

Then almost automatically he took an extra stride faster than he could possibly run, leaped higher than he possibly could leap, and when his wide-spread fingers felt the sharp sting of the ball Lincoln was a full step behind. The single step made the difference, and Lincoln's desperate tackle grazed Swede's heels as he went over the line for six points and the game.

At the final gun, Andy Jones arose from the bench and started across the turf to congratulate the winning coach, which was the formality. The crowd was pouring out of the stadium, flowing over the edge and onto the field like molten metal from a huge ladle. The flood swept over the Wildcat goalposts, bearing them down; waving autograph cards, it engulfed the State players on their way to the field house. A mob was around Coach Hough, shaking his hand and laughing at his slightest word. Coach Andy Jones came alone across the close-clipped turf, picking his way among the eddies of the human flood, unnoticed, a heavy man beginning to sag with the pressure, eyes straight before him and with the howl of the wolves in his ears. The crowd around Coach Hough jostled him as he picked a way through.

"Congratulations, Happy," he said, shaking hands. "Your boys played a great game."

"Thanks, Andy," Hough said. "I was just lucky."

Those were the formalities, and with them over Andy Jones turned away to face the wolves alone.

The shadows were long and cool as Swede came out of the field house. Marta was waiting. She'd been crying. Swede knew she was thinking: "I hope you're satisfied!" She'd been against him in the old argument with his father. She was hurt, now. It hurt her to see Andy Jones defeated.

"That was a great catch, Swede," she said.

"Thanks." There was nothing more to say. "Well, goodbye."

"I'll drive you home," she said.

He didn't know how to refuse the ride. They picked their way among the thousands of cars all trying to get out at once.

"Mother will have dinner ready. Steak for you," Marta said when they reached the car. "Let's sit here awhile until the jam smoothes out."

Swede knew he couldn't face his father. He said, "There's a banquet for the squad tonight. So if you'll drop me at the hotel."

She took his big hand, looking up at him understandingly, her fine eyes still red from crying. "It's all right, Swede. We want you home with us for dinner. We all understand."

Swede said nothing. He didn't understand.

"That professorship's still open in Texas. Andy's going to take it."

Swede swallowed. His throat was tight. It was hard to see his father beaten.

She said, "I really think he's glad, in a way. It's a weight off him. He laughed at me for crying. I think he's really happy in a way."

"If he'd had another year here to build a squad—"

"No; he doesn't feel that way, now. He had good boys, and he knows it. And the fullback—Lincoln—there's a coach's dream. I believe Andy knows it now. He knows that he just isn't cut out for a big-time coach. You either are or you aren't. Now he knows. That's something, to know. But you see he couldn't give up until he'd had his chance—until he *did* know. Now he'll be happy as a professor. If he'd taken the job last year, he'd always have known he should have been a great coach. It would have continually gnawed at him."

Swede nodded miserably. They sat there while the cars crawled slowly past like grains into a giant funnel.

"It's the toughest game of all," Marta went on. "One coach always has to lose, and every coach must always win. That's *why* it calls you, Swede. It's a challenge. You're like Andy was twenty years ago. You can't ignore the challenge. You've got to meet it. You've got to know. You'll never be satisfied until you've made the try."

That was it, Swede realized. He'd never reduced it to so many words.

"I'm running off at the mouth," Marta said. "But you see, I'm

trying to reason things out for myself. There was a moment when you were after that pass, when things seemed to stand still, and I realized what I'm trying to say now. Swede, if you hadn't made that last try for that pass, I wouldn't have been waiting for you. Shall we go home?"

"Yes," Swede said, "let's go." He realized he was hungry, and happy at the prospect of having dinner again at home.

Sparring Partner

by Curt Riess

It was just two o'clock when the Middleweight Champion entered the gym. He took the side stairway, avoiding the front entrance where a couple of hundred fans were waiting to see him pass. He dressed for his workout in the gym owner's private office. For a quarter the fans downstairs could have come up to watch him train.

The Champ made a dramatic entrance into the gym. Striding out of the boss's office he halted in front of the door and turned on his best publicity smile. He was wearing a long silk dressing gown over his gym outfit, a green shimmery thing, tightly belted. The Champ cut a magnificent figure and he knew it.

A moment later three men came out of the same office and joined the Champ. One of them was wearing a derby and chewing a cigar; another, without coat or vest, was rolling up his shirt sleeves; the third, in a red turtleneck sweater, carried the Champ's gloves and head guard in one hand and a jar of rub-down cream in the other. Everybody turned to look toward the door.

The gym was packed. Men were clustered around the two rings and others were sitting on the steps that led to the training rooms and to the gallery on the next floor. There was applause from those who could see the Champ. Some in the crowd called out friendly greetings to him. The Champ rewarded them with a smile and a nod of recognition. A couple of photographers pushed through the crowd and posed the Champ. He stood smiling pleasantly while flash bulbs flared. Reporters left their seats and sauntered over to him.

They didn't have a chance to talk to the Champ, however. After a few words with the fellow in the derby the Champ trotted to the ring, climbed the ropes and gracefully accepted the round of applause. It stopped suddenly when the boss entered the ring and introduced the Champ. It was quiet, too, while the Champ's face was being treated with cream and while his gloves and head guard were being adjusted.

The bell rang and the Champ turned and faced the opposite corner. Only then I noticed the other boxer, taller, slimmer and younger than the Champ. The Champ started things when they met

in the center of the ring, leading with his left, stepping forward and then letting fly with a right hook. The first blow landed but the sparring partner sidestepped the right. Now they were in close, each jabbing at the other's body until the Champ pushed his opponent away, at the same time stabbing at him with short hooks to the face.

"Your left! Use your left!" the man in the derby shouted to the Champ. His left arm vaguely illustrated his instructions. The Champ tried a couple of straight lefts, but the boy danced away from them. The youngster came back with a right to the face, a neat punch that connected squarely with the Champ's nose.

Next to me sat a fight manager called Baldy. There wasn't a hair on his head, which was round and pink and shiny. He was fat and very friendly, for a fight manager.

"What's the kid's name, Baldy?" I asked.

"Whose name?" said Baldy, without taking his eyes from the ring. He wiped his forehead with a rumpled handkerchief. It was getting warm in the gym.

I took a closer look at the Champ's sparring partner. I guessed his weight at 135 or 140. He couldn't have been more than twenty-one, and his unscarred face indicated that he hadn't been in the ring much.

The Champ was in at him again now and tossed a sweet left hook. He followed through with a right uppercut that jolted the youngster's head. The kid was giving way and the crowd shouted its appreciation. A reporter leaned over to the guy in the derby. "The Champ's got a honey of a left," he said. The trainer grunted and shifted his cigar, but didn't say anything. He was watching the Champ, watching his every move.

The kid had been driven into a corner and was covering his face with his arms; the Champ was pounding his ribs with fast little punches and the kid's sides were getting red in patches. The kid ducked out of the corner but the Champ stuck with him.

"Say, all he's got to do is fight like that on the big night," somebody said.

The fellow in shirt sleeves at the corner of the ring looked around. "You ain't seen nothing yet, Buddy," he said.

The sparring partner finally recovered and shot two or three short lefts to the Champ's chest. I could see him better now. A good-looking kid. His black hair, which had been combed flat, was

beginning to muss and a couple of strands fell over his forehead. His eyes were large and dark, his nose straight and very sharp. The hips were narrow, but so were the shoulders. Not yet fully developed, probably. His legs were fine—muscular and elastic.

The Champ wasn't boxing at all now. He let the sparring partner use both hands and just ducked and weaved and side-stepped, keeping out of the way. The crowd enjoyed his clever stalling, but it didn't last long. From a crouched position the Champ delivered a long, sudden left. It landed squarely on the kid's nose and mouth with just enough power to knock him off balance. He fell back and bounced heavily against the ropes. A thin line of blood ran from his mouth. The gong clanged. The Champ, about to follow up his attack, stopped at the sound and turned back to his corner. The guy in shirt sleeves gave him water and started to dry him off.

At the gong the chatter among the fans had got so loud you had to shout to be heard. A flash bulb went off. Near me a young fellow with bright red hair talked loudly and rapidly to a reporter.

"There's gonna be another hell of a fuss about the food when we get back to camp," he said. "The Champ'll only eat what his mother cooks. The last time we—"

"So what?" the reporter said. The redhead walked away.

Somebody had thrown a towel to the sparring partner who was alone in his corner drying his arms and chest. His face was wet and he was still breathing rapidly. Baldy was watching him too. "Name's Jimmy Rossi, he's a welterweight. Got possibilities," Baldy said to me. I said it looked that way to me too.

The man in the derby, still chewing his cigar, was talking to the Champ, giving him instructions. The Champ nodded steadily, staring at his gloves. The fellow in shirt sleeves straightened the Champ's head guard.

"They want to show off for the papers," said Baldy. "Watch this."

The bell sounded.

The boxers danced around each other, exchanging short, experimental lefts and rights. They kept it up for a while, ducking, twisting and showing off some clever footwork. The pace was fast and very soon the kid's breathing was audible all over the gym.

The redhead was talking quietly now to another reporter. The

newspaperman listened dully, but the redhead seemed satisfied when he scribbled something on a piece of paper.

The Champ was boxing now, but he was pulling his punches and watching his sparring partner's lefts which were getting annoying even though they usually bounced off the head guard. The reporter that Red had just spoken to was disgusted. "He's a sucker for a left," he said. "He better learn how to keep away from them before he takes on the Nigger, or else."

"Okay, let 'er go!" called the man in the derby, taking the cigar out of his mouth. The Champ nodded. He pushed the kid away to arm's length and reached out with a straight, fast left. Rossi sidestepped to avoid the Champ's right which he saw coming and walked into a second left, a solid, well-timed blow that had the Champ's whole body behind it. It caught Rossi on the temple and shook him. The kid's arms relaxed and his legs wobbled.

The guy in the derby was shouting something, but you couldn't catch the words. The fans were making a terrific racket. A flash went off. Rossi picked himself up and the Champ ran over to help him. The photographers yelled to hold it. The Champ smiled, and there were more flashes.

Red was talking to the reporter again. "We got the damnedest job finding sparring partners," he said. "They're afraid they'll get killed. Last year when we were training for the Frenchman—"

Jimmy Rossi was on his feet now, massaging his neck. He went to his corner, picked up his towel and began to dry himself. I asked Baldy if he knew how much the kid got for the two rounds. He shrugged his shoulders. "Must have got ten bucks, sparring with the Champ," he said. "The others only pay two, three, five bucks, or nothing at all if they're broke."

The Champ was in his own corner again, rinsing his mouth. The gong rang and a fresh sparring partner climbed into the ring. He bowed all around. Jimmy Rossi climbed out of the ring.

"Sparring partners for heavyweights get a lot more," Baldy continued. "Heavyweight fighters can afford to pay more. They muss up their partners more too."

I pushed my way through to the stairway and went up to the next floor. Ten or twelve young fellows were jumping rope and others were working out on punching bags and sand dummies. They all stopped when a bell sounded and wiped the sweat away. You

could hear their slow, deep breathing while they rested. Another clang started them working again.

Jimmy Rossi was jumping too. He was taking it very easy, hopping slowly, not exerting himself. Baldy spoke to him during the rest period and Rossi nodded.

I was upstairs only a few minutes when the Champ himself came in, followed by reporters, photographers and a couple of dozen fans. Some of the fans had to go downstairs again because there wasn't enough room. The Champ started on a sandbag. He began slowly, then increased his speed and power. He got in close and bombarded the bag with furious hooks and uppercuts. The Champ hit from the shoulder, putting every ounce of weight and energy into it: I remembered Jimmy Rossi had been knocked down with that same punch. Sandbag or sparring partner, the Champ has to get into form.

I walked over to where Baldy was standing wiping the perspiration from his pink skull. I asked him what he thought of Rossi.

"Want to buy him?" asked Baldy.

I shrugged.

"Jimmy's got a future," Baldy said, "with that left of his. He's got a lot to learn, though. The whole trouble is, the beginners today, they don't have trainers worth a damn."

"You own Jimmy?" I asked.

"I know the guy who's got him signed up. Maybe we can do business." Baldy looked at me.

"Say," I said, "if Jimmy's that good why do they let him spar with the Middleweight Champ?"

"Why shouldn't a young boxer earn a little money sparring?" he asked. "Ten dollars for two rounds is nothing to sneeze at."

"How much do you think he earns a year, Baldy?" I asked.

Baldy was suspicious. "What's that got to do with buying the contract?" he wanted to know.

I laughed. "Say, forget the contract. I'm not in the market."

"Well," said Baldy, not completely convinced, "let's see. A kid like Jimmy only fights in small clubs. If he's lucky, maybe he gets a couple of fights at the Garden. I guess he must get twenty-five bucks for four rounds. If he shows up good and the crowds like him maybe he gets a hundred or a hundred fifty for six or eight rounds. That's about the most he can make a night."

"How often can he fight?" I asked.

"If he don't get hurt—well, maybe twenty times a year."

"So he's good for anywhere from five hundred to one thousand dollars a year," I said.

"Could be more, could be less," Baldy said.

"What's his manager's take?" I asked.

Baldy was indignant. "Not a cent. We don't take a damn cent from small-time boxers. If the kid ever gets anywhere we make real money. If not, we're out of luck."

The redhead was back again giving the dope to another reporter. "All we had to do was sign on the dotted line out there in Los Angeles," he was explaining. "We were getting fifty per cent of the gate. But when they offered a ten-thousand-dollar guaranty the Champ just laughed in their faces. The Champ wouldn't put on a pair of gloves for a guaranty less than twenty-five grand. The Champ told them he wasn't running no benefit."

"About as much as an elevator boy," I said to Baldy.

Red was talking again. "We done the right thing when we come east. There's dough in these parts." His eyes glittered. "If I only made what Joe Louis pays for income tax."

The Champ finished his workout and went downstairs again.

Baldy was beginning to get sore. "That's only the beginning, I tell you," he said emphatically. "My God, who don't know that a boxer's got a better chance to get in the dough than an elevator boy."

I turned to go, but just then Rossi walked up to us. He was sweaty and out of breath. He had a towel around his shoulders and he was still carrying his rope.

"Jimmy, I'd like you to meet a good friend of mine," said Baldy. "Jimmy Rossi, Mr.——"

I told him my name.

"Glad to meet you," Jimmy said. We shook hands and he went on downstairs to the showers. "See you later," he said.

I went downstairs too. Most of the crowd had left when the Champ finished his workout for the day. I sat down in a ringside seat and lit a cigarette. It was a good-sized gym. The rings took up only about a third of the floor space. The windows were two stories high and should have been enough to light the place, but it was gloomy as hell. The floodlights over each ring made the rest of the gym seem darker. Everything except the rings was grey and indistinct. Stale, bluish tobacco smoke hung in clouds, its odor

mingling with that of massage oils and human sweat. You could hear feet scraping on the resined canvas and the ring platform creaking as the boxers sparred with one another. There was a vague undercurrent murmur of scraps of conversation, laughter and hoarse calls for this or that one to come to the phone. Every three minutes the gong sounded and other boxers would take their turns in the rings.

There was a boxer in the ring nearer me whom I was sure I had seen somewhere else. I watched him awhile and then I recalled that I had seen him box in the Garden a couple of years before. He was a light-heavy and not bad in his prime. I hadn't seen him in the meantime, and he'd gone downhill fast. There was a broad ring of fat above his trunks and his face was puffed and heavy. His opponent was a wiry young Negro boy who was boxing circles around him, landing one left jab after the other on his chin: the old-timer's face was coloring up. He kept swinging after the Negro but he couldn't touch him. The boy kept out of reach. The old-timer was already beginning to breathe hard.

I saw somebody I knew coming out of the boss's office. He was one of the doctors hired by the New York State Athletic Commission. The reporters had evidently been waiting for him. "Everything O.K., gentlemen," he said. "If it were up to me the Champ could fight tomorrow. He's in fine condition, fine condition."

The round was over and the old-timer walked heavily back to his corner. He couldn't have been more than thirty. The colored boy was twenty-one at most. In ten years the Negro boy would be breathing hard too.

The old-timer leaned exhausted against the post in his corner while Lou, his trainer, dried him off. I knew Lou and I wondered what he was thinking of, training his has-been. When the gong sounded he pushed his man into the middle of the ring.

The doctor came over to me and sat down. He watched the sparring and I saw right away that he didn't like the looks of it. He was looking at the old timer's legs and they were awful. Grey-white colored, with the flesh all flabby and loose. Like the legs of a tottering old man. They seemed to quiver with every punch.

The doctor motioned Lou over. "I suppose you know he's got no license," he said. "What's he training for?"

"He's signed up for a bout somewhere in the Middle West."

"You mean he's letting himself be beat to a pulp for a lousy

two hundred dollars. And the promoter collects a grand. The crowd pays because he once had a name. Nice going, Lou," the doctor said.

Lou said, "He has a wife and three kids."

"Another couple of fights and you'll take him to the hospital."

Lou glanced over at the ring and answered in a low voice, "What the hell can I do, Doc? You know me, you know I don't like it. But the poor guy's starving. When he was going good I was his trainer and made money. Now he asks me to train him for this fight. My God, I can't just tell him he's washed up. I'm not getting a nickel out of it, Doc—he can't even pay his rent. I gave him a five spot yesterday so he could feed his kids."

The doctor said nothing.

"Can you tell me what else to do, Doc?" said Lou. "It's no fun, you know, pushing a guy into the ring and saying, 'go on, fight,' when you know the guy can't fight and when you know he's scared as all hell."

Lou went back to the corner.

"Does the Commission revoke many licenses?" I asked.

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "It's a nasty job, taking a license away from a man who doesn't realize he's burnt out," he answered. "Most fighters don't know when they're through."

We went to the little soft drink bar at the back of the gym and ordered orange drinks.

"Very few of them know when to quit," he repeated. "They wouldn't have the money even if they knew they were through."

Lou came up for a drink too. "Doc," he said. "I'll tell you what the whole trouble is. It's the women. It's the women makes these guys soft. Women and drink. It's not how much punishment you take in the ring, it's how you take your women and your liquor." Lou spoke in a tone of finality and conviction.

The doctor shook his head. "No, Lou, you're wrong," he said. "It's the punishment you take. Our heads weren't made to be punched at. Every time they're hit there are minor brain hemorrhages and that means pressure on the nerve centers. Everybody can take just so many punches, Lou. When you've had your quota, you're through."

"It was the women, Doc," Lou said. "The women softened him up." Lou didn't want any more argument so he walked away.

The doctor gulped his drink. "Trouble is, there's nothing a has-

been fighter can do. At thirty he doesn't know anything but boxing and he can't box."

Jimmy Rossi was coming by, looking very sporty in a light grey suit and a blue tie. I stopped him and asked if he wanted something to drink. He ordered a glass of milk. The doctor looked at the clock. "You read too much about the few fighters who make good and not enough about the hundreds who go punch drunk," he said. He waved so-long and left.

Jimmy smiled. "There's plenty the old gent don't know about boxing," he said. "There's no law says you have to go slug nutty. If you know how to handle yourself you'll get along."

Jimmy finished the milk and we walked over to the row of chairs against the wall and sat down. I looked at him. Funny thing, I thought, he looks older than he did in the ring. His face—it looked years older than his body. You saw a fierce fixity of purpose in that face which made a mature person of him. Then I realized that all the fighters had that same hard look about them. It molded their mouths and sharpened their eyes and made them look tense and cruel, these kids.

Jimmy started to tell me about himself. He was twenty years old, came from a small town in Pennsylvania. He had boxed as an amateur for three years before he became a professional. Then he came to New York because there wasn't any real boxing in his home town. He didn't have any money, but he managed to get along. He boxed, earned a few dollars sparring and was broke pretty often.

"I don't really need so much," he said. "I live in a furnished room. My biggest expense is food. You got to eat if you want to box."

I asked him if things were looking up for him.

"All I want is a chance to show what I can do. The Champ is lousy and so is the challenger. I could run through the whole gang without working up a sweat if I had the chance."

"You got pounded around some today, though, Jimmy," I said.

Jimmy frowned. "That was only a lucky punch he hit me. The next time I spar with him just watch and see." The hard, drawn look was in his eyes again.

"When you get your chance, then what?"

"The rest is a cinch," he said. "In a year I'm World's Champion. Just watch."

I wanted to ask him if he believed any part of what he was say-

ing. But he was very young and not too bright, so probably he did.

"Figure it out for yourself," he continued. "Who is there to stop me? They're only a bunch of bums." He got up to go.

Maybe he really could do it, I thought, after he had left. Maybe the twenty or so fighters who blocked his way to the Championship were as lousy as he said. Maybe he would be Champ in a year. Somebody would be the Champ; it could be Jimmy Rossi. . . . Well, it was none of my business. I got up.

The gym was nearly empty and only one ring was still in use. A few managers were still standing around, gabbing with Baldy. I walked the other way to look at the photographs of fighters which were hung along one wall of the gym at eye level. Each picture was autographed. One of the photos caught my eye. It was of a young boxer with a swell build, smiling confidently. He really had what it takes. I looked at the date on the picture. It was seven years old. Seven years ago the old-timer who had just taken a beating from the young Negro was a promising young boxer with the Championship just around the corner, I thought to myself.

Baldy came up to me. "Get you a good price on Rossi," he said. "How about it?"

I said I'd think it over. Baldy said O.K.

A reporter came out of the boss's office and looked around to see who was still in the gym. He walked toward me. "Come along and have a drink?" he said. We got as far as the door and I stopped.

"My God, in seven years."

"What's eating you?" he asked me.

"Just thinking," I said. "Get a story?"

"The Champ gave me an interview—exclusive. The same old publicity hooey. I'm fed up on it."

"You ought to try another angle some time," I said. "Interviews with a Champ are a dime a dozen. Interview a sparring partner."

"Did you say interview a sparring partner?"

"That's right. A second-rater. The guy who lets himself be smacked down for a couple of bucks."

The reporter looked at me suspiciously. "Sob story stuff. I get it."

"No, not sob story stuff," I said. "Just facts and figures."

We started down the stairs to the street. I said, "Every time we read that a fighter has a record of thirty or forty K.O.'s it means

that thirty or forty men have been knocked cold. How often do you think a man can stand being knocked out?"

"It's no good," said the reporter. "Nobody would be interested. The public likes success stories. It would never get past the desk, anyhow."

We were on Eighth Avenue now, walking downtown. We stopped in front of a bar. The reporter said:

"I was going to write novels once. I was going to stay in journalism just till I learned the ropes. You know how long I've been in it? Twenty years. And what do I write? Exclusive interviews with bums. You know what I am? Burnt out and punch drunk. Plenty punch drunk."

We went in.

Murder at the Thirteenth Hole

by Wallace Irwin

Nobody in Midlothian dreamed, even jestingly, of letting business interfere with golf. Outland critics who said that pleasure before business was the rule there were ignorantly confusing golf with pleasure. A fundamental error. Golf is not a pastime. It is a rite, a system of self-mortification as definite as that by which the holy Brahmin attains merit. Merit at Midlothian was par at 69. In that devout colony Heaven was a hole in two, Hell a sand trap behind a beetling bunker. When the census taker reported on Midlothian public schools he wrote down, "Girls 118, caddies 142," without fear of rebuke from the Board of Regents.

It would be next to impossible, you would say, to panel a jury in Midlothian during the season of the open championship. Only the sporting problem involved in the Spillinger-McGool murder case could drag twelve addicts away from the championship course to sit for days in the stuffy courthouse, which was rather too near the fairway to afford perfect concentration on a matter of life and death. A window behind the jury box overlooked the ninth hole, which was distracting. A colored caddy was testifying that he saw something that looked like blood; when Juror No. 6, craning toward the window, whispered to Juror No. 5, "Gee, look! He holed it with a chip shot!" Judge Lamb, who had also been stealing a peep at the play, commanded, "Order! That was no chip shot. It was a decided roll. One of Tannenbaum's characteristic approaches. Bailiff, pull down the shade and we may proceed with the trial."

Now the trial had reached its conclusive day, and the guilt or innocence of Basil F. Spillinger was about to be put to the test. Basil sat among his attorneys, his locker-room face drawn and haggard, as if he were accusing himself of slicing a long drive around the dog's leg. With passionate coldness the district attorney had outlined his case; the evidence was circumstantial, but damning to the murderous villain over there. Fervently the defense had exhorted the jury to revere their American sense of fair play. Regard, if you please, the impeccable reputation of Mr. Basil F. Spillinger, who had even served on Midlothian's greens committee. Then look at

the evil repute of the late Nicodemus McGool, caught time and again teeing his ball on a summer fairway. McGool had enemies galore. But not Mr. Spillinger, who had always been the soul of kindness to this desperate and evil man. Here was a crime where comedy impinged on tragedy, but the State had been unable to produce one witness to the murder. Somebody had killed McGool, obviously, and with a golf club. But not Spillinger. Some enemy concealed in the caddy house might have propelled the lethal tool from a bow and arrow. Why not? Such crimes have been committed, and if the prosecution had been sufficiently diligent in tracing up the real culprit . . .

Basil F. Spillinger raised his golf-tired eyes and surveyed the courtroom, which was half empty—today they were playing off the finals, and Midlothian had no time to waste on murders. In the middle of the courtroom, Basil saw the girl in pink shaking her auburn mane and improving her smile with a lipstick. Devoutly he wished that she had stayed home . . .

Judge Lamb smacked his lips appreciatively over a heavy manuscript, straightened his bifocals and assumed the self-enamored look of an author about to read a little something he has just dashed off. Then he began instructing the jury on fine points in the Spillinger-McGool murder case. In the transcript which follows I have taken some liberties; for no merely judicial mind can penetrate the gloomy deeps of human passion.

Consider the character of both men. Spillinger, a heavy reader, had distorted his sight and weakened his game until his handicap had become a mock and a byword; he had a vile habit of lecturing on theory and topping his ball. Behind him he left a trail of divots and sophistries. McGool was an egocentric dub; of the kind who learn nothing because they know it all in the first place. Spillinger and McGool always played together, for reasons best known to Pariahs.

It happened on an early spring morning, the air disturbing with earth's growing sap. Basil Spillinger went blinkingly out to the first tee, hoping that McGool had forgotten the rash bargain they made yesterday while quenching themselves at the nineteenth hole; that was just highball golf, properly off the record. . . . Basil waited lazily, watching the blue flight of a passing butterfly. Love, he thought, is lots more fun than golf—but you can't dance all night and keep fit, can you? Who cares, if it's with a girl like

Corinne—or was the name Florine, or possibly Codeine? She was April, swirling in his arms, renewing youth. After all, he wasn't forty yet. . . .

A nasty voice disturbed his dream, saying, "Competitive golf!" tauntingly, and there was McGool, coming up with the colored caddy they called Ice Bag. McGool, who habitually worked without a hat, seemed to glow with an infernal tan; two sprouts of hair that stood up like incipient horns, long leering eyes and a twisted moustache completed the demon's make-up. He was the Devil himself, repeating, "Competitive golf!"

"Uh-what?" asked Basil, and ceased to be in love. In company with McGool you couldn't love anything, even yourself. "Competitive golf. Oh, yes. I did mention it to you, didn't I?"

"You mentioned it yesterday for two hours and a pint of Scotch," McGool prompted. "I believe you said that the only reason I've been licking you six up is because the game's not competitive."

"And it's not," said Basil, squaring his jaw. "Golf was invented by the Dutch in the Dark Ages. In Scotland it was played by Mary Queen of Scots and Charles Stuart."

"And they both got their heads cut off. Is that what you're trying to prove? Listen, I can read the Encyclopedia Britannica too. But I won't. I don't read golf. I play it." McGool showed a rather cannibalistic set of teeth.

"Nevertheless, golf is not a competitive game," said Basil firmly. "Didn't Westbrook Pegler—or was it Grantland Rice—say, 'It's not competitive'? How can it be, with two players, each with his own ball, doing nothing to interfere with the other man's game? If a man played polo that way they'd lock him up with the horses. And imagine two football teams, playing with twenty-two balls, everybody stopping to chalk up his own score. Why, even in marbles you knock the other fellow's alley taw out of the ring. That's sport. What's golf?"

"Search me," said Devil McGool. "I've been watching your game too long to have any ideas."

The naturally gentle Basil fulminated. "All right, if you'll play it the way God—who isn't a Scotchman—intended games to be played, I'll lick the living pants off you."

"I believe you said that yesterday," said McGool, "and I've come to take my punishment. Call it five dollars a hole."

"Ten," grunted Basil. "And we play it with one ball, see? Tee

it up, we stand at five paces on either side and when Ice Bag whistles we both go at it."

"Any more rules?" asked McGool pleasantly.

"Not for the present." Like wary duelists the competitors stood their distance, ready to spring, while Ice Bag set the ball on its little peg; then, downing a giggle, the boy whistled on his fingers. A leap, the merry clash of jousting as two knights sprang to action. A club-head flew off as the astonished ball leaped like a rabbit, fifty yards into the rough. "Mr. Spillinger hit it!" rejoiced Mr. Spillinger's caddy. "Niblick, niblick!" was McGool's clan call as he raced down the glen. His legs were faster than Basil's, but Basil's caddy, the one they called Half Portion, had the seeing eye. "Here it is!" he wailed, and Basil's niblick missed McGool's foot by an inch, gashing the ball back into the fairway. From then on it was yoiks and tantivvy, instruments of sport scattered along the way, putters swinging into better mashie shots than either had ever made with a mashie.

In their competitive ardor, approaching the flag, their gyrations did some credit to hockey form. McGool had landed on Spillinger's left leg, but Spillinger slashed bravely on. In the frenetic joy of slaughter Basil was trying to keep score. He had taken eleven strokes to McGool's seventeen, and the mangled ball perched on the edge of the green. Here McGool, who had done nothing but sneer, spoke articulately.

"Competitive golf! I suppose you've invented a patent score card for this nut astronomy?"

Basil rested on his wounded leg. "The object of every competitive game is to make a goal. In competitive golf the goal's the cup. Naturally."

They stood knee to knee, putters crossed over the severely punished ball. "This is going to be good," whispered Ice Bag to his friend as the putters engaged in cunning sword play. Then something happened to Basil. His heels went up, his head went down and he kissed the velvet sward. McGool had hooked a putter around his ankle. The ball rolled toward the cup and Half Portion sunk it slyly with his foot.

"Foul!" decided Basil, spitting grass.

"How can there be a foul when there are no rules?" grinned Devil McGool.

"All right," threatened Basil, "you owe me ten on this one. And if you want to get tough, come on."

From that point Midlothian's rolling sward became a jousting field, untidy with broken lances and dented armor. To Basil Spillinger, inventor of competitive golf, it was a scene of bruised confusion, of duck-on-a-rock, of hare-and-hounds, of alley grudge-fighting with no holds barred. Basil in retrospect recalled pushing the scoundrel from behind when he caught him teeing on the fairway. He remembered McGool's hoot, "Lookit the snake!" that spoiled the only good brassie shot of the day. And the time the slimy devil's caddy directed Basil to a small, white mushroom, leaving McGool to a long swing that put the ball within a yard of the seventh hole.

They had run and wrestled most of the way over a course that had killed several walking fat men. As they approached the twelfth their pace slowed, for the human frame can take just so much punishment. In his exaltation Basil forgot his lame leg, although he had developed a decided limp. This would have given McGool the edge, except that Basil learned the value of throwing wet divots. Once he threw his hat, something seldom attempted in championship play. Staggering toward the twelfth they were even steven.

Then Basil had a winning idea. The ball, for some fantastic reason, lay quite a distance in the foreground. There was a cross-cut through the woods which would bring Basil out yards ahead of his rival. He gained speed. He plunged in. He stopped. Under a silver birch, graceful as the tree, stood a girl in pink. She was fixing something which, had Basil been King James, might have caused him to remark, "Honi soit!" He stood at gaze, he blushed and reflected that bathing suits are God's gift to some girls. She looked up and smiled appreciatively—the girl named Corinne, or Florine or Codeine. She wasn't dressed for golf; she looked like a goddess fresh from a tea party.

"Oh," she said appropriately.

"Oh," he responded, not to be outdone. Then murmured something about wasn't it a lovely day. He stood rooted, nymph-bound, torn between love and duty. His duty was to be out there on the course, whaling the living lights out of McGool. And love . . .

She said, "Oh, Mr. Spillinger, I'm so glad you came along! I'm so stupid, and I tried to climb a tree. In these clothes. Just look what I've done." A scarlet-nailed left hand—wearing no engage-

ment ring he noticed—pointed up the tree. A navy blue sweater dangled some twenty feet above.

"Dar—" he began, then turned a brash "darling" into, "Darn it, how'd that thing get up there?"

"I was knitting it for a naval aviator," she said innocently.

"Up the tree?"

"Oh, no. An ant or something bit me, and I hung it on a twig so that I could—anyhow, something made the twig snap up, and there it is. Mr. Spillinger, you're so smart, and so strong."

"It looks easy," he said. Powerfully he seized the branch near the base, strained at it, pulled it down. It took several tries before he got it so low that she could rip the sweater loose and treasure it against her breast. Duty sprang up and pushed him toward the fairway, but her look told him that she had something more to say. She held out a mauve ticket.

"For the Saturday dance," she said. "For the Red Cross."

"Leave it in my mail box," he said, and added jealously, "I suppose you'll be there with the naval aviators."

"I wasn't with aviators last night." Her eyes came down like beryl window shades. "Mr. Spillinger, you're so argumentative."

"What did I argue about?"

"You kept saying that college made girls unfeminine. I went to bed wondering if you thought that about me . . ." Suddenly she gave his face a startled look. "Why, Mr. Spillinger, you're all over scratches—and a piece of mud under your eye! Aren't you afraid of tetanus, or something? Here . . ." She produced a cloudy handkerchief and began sopping the wound. Oh, pure delight, the grateful touch of a ministering angel. . . .

Then suddenly out of nowhere suspicion struck like a javelin.

"See here, Codeine," he snarled, "did that devil plant you here to stop me? Did he?" He grabbed her delicious shoulders and shook her fiercely.

"Hey, are you crazy?" she screamed. "Let go you—"

Basil bounded out of the woodland, to see McGool in the distance serenely inhaling cigarette smoke while Ice Bag replaced the flag. He had sunk the ball.

Silently the sworn enemies bumbled their way toward the fatal Thirteenth. Human energy has its limits and mayhem becomes monotonous, even to professional wrestlers. Basil's soul was heavy with the sullen thought that his Pink Girl had gone yellow on him.

Listlessly he permitted McGool to trip him up twice, but sought no reprisals. Competitive golf was essentially all right, he reflected, but it required rules. This experience would set him back twenty bucks, but what of it? Experiments cost.

The tragedy on Hole Thirteen was without witnesses, for the good reason that the caddies finally went on strike. McGool, mistaking friend for foe, had thrown a No. 2 iron at Ice Bag's head; whereat Ice Bag explained that he wouldn't take nothing from no gentleman, and went home, closely followed by Half Portion. On the edge of the green the enemies stood at bay. In the haste of combat Basil seized the most inappropriate club, his old dented niblick. McGool stepped on his foot, but Basil's iron struck on the dot. The ball rolled accurately across, and stopped an inch from the cup.

It might have been all right, even then, had McGool kept his mouth shut. But that satanic mouth writhed beneath the twisted moustache and said the thing which no dub, since the birth of golf has been able to bear with equanimity.

"Never up, never in," he sneered.

Basil Spillinger saw red. . . .

* * *

So the hour of reckoning was at hand; the case rested with the jury. In the Midlothian courthouse there was doomful quiet; the sparse spectators had galloped away to follow a rumor that Sandy Tannenbaum was losing the match to Alec Stiletto. Alone on the classic verandah the girl in pink smoked nervously and tossed lipsticked cigarette butts into the inflammable bushes. The judge was in his chambers, reading The Sportsman's Primer, and in an airtight anteroom Basil Spillinger sat among the sheriffs and lawyers. The competitive golfer looked into space and the attorney for the defense said, "The jury system should be abolished."

The jury, golfers to the last man and woman of them, spent 3 hours 44.2 minutes in point-to-point discussion. Toward the end of the session they sent out a request to see the lethal instrument which had supposedly felled Nicodemus McGool at Hole Thirteen. The club was sent in to them, and in a very few minutes they filed back into the courtroom. Basil Spillinger, summoned again to the dock, gazed lockjawed into the face of destiny. The foreman stood up, and Basil recognized Archie van Gordon, who had been the colony's ruling pro until he was fired for eloping with Midlothian's glamor girl. Archie was a golfer to his bones. Basil shuddered.

"Have you reached a verdict?" asked Judge Lamb in his best conversational tone.

"We have, yer Worrrrrship." Archie van Gordon's voice was heavy and thick with doom. "We find the dee-fendant not guilty."

The judge scratched his head with a fountain pen, leaving a diagram on his bald spot.

"Not guilty?" he remarked. "It is not the usual procedure for the court to question the jury's decision. But since this is not a—er —usual case, I am going to waive precedent and ask you by what course of reasoning you have come to your conclusion."

"Weel, mon, yer Worrrrship," said Archie van Gordon, who had learned his Scotch in Omaha, "we conseedered the accused a wee bit guilty, ye might say, until we studied the nature of the blood-stained club that lay beside the body at Hole Thirteen. Then we immediately decided that murrrder was impossible."

"Impossible?"

"Aye, yer Worrship. The club was a niblick. And it's well known wherrever golf is played that a niblick is *never* used on a putting green."

"Quite right!" said Judge Lamb cordially. "Let me thank the jurors. The case is dismissed."

Leaping to freedom, Basil Spillinger couldn't find anybody to kiss except the girl in pink. As they raced away arm in arm she whispered, "Sugar pie, you don't really think I stopped you there in the woods just to spoil your game! I thought you wanted to talk to me. How did I know you had a date to kill a man?"

"But you don't think I killed him, do you?" he faltered.

"I'm not blind, darling," she smiled. "I saw you. I've often wondered why somebody didn't do it long ago."

"Hm. But why didn't you testify that you saw it?"

"Nobody asked me to. Am I supposed to testify when nobody asks me?" Her angel face was serene with happiness.

"Sweetheart," he murmured, "your dumbness strengthens me to go back and begin life anew. I want you passionately—let's go over and see how the Tannenbaum-Costello match came out."

Approaching the course, they saw that the match had been played off. People were going home, making gestures like fancy shots. Basil, arm-linked with his fiancée, stopped a group of his old club-mates. They should be the first to know.

"I'm the luckiest man on earth," he proclaimed. "This lovely

has promised to marry me, and a jury has just acquitted me of murder!"

"That's nice," said his lifelong friends listlessly. Then their faces brightened to full flame. "Heard the news? Sandy Tannenbaum rallied on the Thirteenth and made it in par again!"

Ill-Fated Cruise of the Canarsie III

by Louis Paul

I RECALL it went back to the night we gave the party for the Van Reynals: one of those meaningless New York soirées at which most of the cocktail glasses get broken and a few more holes are burned in the rug and one wonders for what earthly purpose one is running up huge liquor and delicatessen bills. Dorothea's eyes were bloodshot. When the last guest had staggered into the elevator she sank wearily back on the chaise longue; the poor kid looked more like a heroin addict than the lovely girl she actually is. I ripped off my collar and tie and threw them absently into the wastebasket.

"What," I murmured groggily, thinking of the necessity to get up in an hour or so and dash down to the publisher's office where I worked, "what, darling, does it all mean?"

"All what?" asked Dorothea sleepily.

"Everything," I replied, not then quite understanding the import of my confused thoughts. "You know. Civilization. This—well, this gay life we are living."

"You're absolutely right, sweetheart," said Dorothea shrugging. "Take off your shoes and go to bed."

But no. Some peculiar yeast of dissatisfaction was boiling within me. It was probably the blood of my pioneer ancestors coming to the fore, but at the time I had no way of knowing this. I thought it might even be the old-fashioneds. "I'm going to make some coffee first," I said and went into the kitchen, where I fiddled about absentmindedly, having completely forgotten what I'd intended to do out there.

Suddenly, like the white blinding flash which they say accompanies inspiration (I had not been bothered much that way personally up till then) I understood what my whole life had been groping toward. Standing ankle-deep in the kitchen amongst the orange skins and broken crockery and cigarette butts, symbols of a decadent existence, I knew. I simply knew!

Well, we sat there discussing it for hours. Dorothea agreed heartily with me that cigarette butts and orange peels were the symbols of a decadent existence, but it was some time before she

could get used to the revolutionary plan that had now shaped itself in my mind.

When she understood that we should cut ourselves completely clean from our former empty lives, leave civilization behind and seek some lovely island paradise where we could live out the years in halcyon peacefulness, she took fire from my enthusiasm.

"But about money, sweetheart?" she inquired finally, wrinkling her brow.

I explained that in the existence we had decided to embrace money was but a remnant of decadent civilization. Let us think only of the primitive essentials. We should live as little children, eating the products of the rich tropical climate—breadfruit and mangoes and yams and papaya and frangipani and whatnot. Materialism was the curse that reduced us to the status of slaves. And all for what? Defective refrigerators and old-fashioneds.

How gay we were, then, speculating on the prospect before us! No more foolish parties; no long, tedious plowing through talentless manuscripts; no more overpriced apartments and jangling city noises and grubbing for a bare existence. We decided to realize all the cash we could and purchase a boat, some seaworthy craft wherein we might embark upon our idyllic adventure. I lost no time in advising my employees that we had made up our minds to put civilization behind us forever. They accepted my resignation with rather better sportsmanship than I expected. After much excited study of maps and charts and atlases and cartographical data we hit on a virgin island in the Caribbean. It did not take us long, either, to come upon the very boat for our purpose—a thirty-five foot Diesel-powered vessel with auxiliary sail, named the *Canarsie III*.

I knew little of boats, my only experience in deep water having been an overnight hop to Boston from New York. But we borrowed of an author friend and studied the works of Conrad, McFee, Bill Adams, and others, confident that an intelligence applied in proper fashion is better than a lifetime of actual experience divorced of aspiration, or something like that.

It was a fine Saturday morning that we set sail for tropical waters. An old fellow at the wharf, with a nasty sort of inquisitiveness, discovered our plans from Dorothea, and mumbled some nonsense about passports and clearance papers and sailing certificates. He could not know that we were putting such impedimenta of crass

civilization behind us. We were adventuring into the unknown; what need had we to bother with the claptrap of bureaucracy? Our larder was well stocked with cheese sandwiches and canned beans and coffee and bacon and so on. We had brought along oilskins and sou'westers, fishhooks and a copy of Wodehouse, hunting knives and snakebite medicine and sun helmets. And, with the knowledge we had acquired from Jack London and Dana and O'Neill about storms at sea, we were confident that we could ride out any gale or hurricane these waters could boast.

The sun was shining over our port bow; the wind was blowing steadily to wind'ard; I remember my sensation of exultation as I stood within the tiny wheelhouse forrard, the spoke gripped firmly in my lean fingers, my eyes glued on the jumping needle within the binnacle, an open copy of Bowditch's *Navigator* before me. Dorothea had donned cute white ducks and a cocky sailor's cap. She fussed about in the galley, and the smell of burning eggs and bacon came forrard to tease my nostrils. The *Canarsie III* drove bravely through the choppy seas of the bay, stout of heart and sturdy of beam. Was ever inspiration more triumphant than at this happy moment, the moment when our dreams were about to be realized? All that was left of the skyscrapers of Manhattan, civilization itself, faded aft of us as we hove our course through the open channel that separates Brooklyn and the Jersey shore. I glanced down at the open Bowditch and read:

"It is assumed that the noon longitude will be sufficiently accurately known in advance to enable the navigator to correct the declination; also the approximate meridian altitude to correct the parallax and refraction; if the latter is not known, it may readily be found from the declination and approximate latitude."

I thought then and there that neither Conrad nor McFee had said a word about any necessity to correct the parallax, nor did I understand why there should be anything wrong with it in the first place. So I let it go. There were other more pressing things on my mind. All sight of land had been lost. I had planned to stick within sight of the Atlantic coast until I'd mastered this navigation business. But somehow the Atlantic coast had got away from me. The needle in the compass was pointing sou' by sou' sou'west on the stationary dial; but the bow of the *Canarsie III* might very well be headed toward Nova Scotia for all I knew. My common sense told

me it was immaterial where the needle was pointing; what mattered was in what direction the boat was going.

After reading a few more pages of Bowditch, the vessel meanwhile bouncing unpleasantly over the whitecaps, I decided that a conference with my wife and first mate, as I had laughingly dubbed her, would not be amiss. We rejected as leaving too much to chance her suggestion that if the weather became appreciably warmer after a few days we would know we were correctly heading south. At the conclusion of a protracted debate, during which the seas had become choppier and choppier, the solution presented itself to me; my intelligence, sharpened preternaturally by this first stark struggle with the elements, convinced me that if the helm were turned about in such a fashion as to bring the needle directly north, so that it aimed at my stomach, it followed quite logically that the prow of the vessel must point exactly in the opposite direction, or dead south. I was forcibly struck by the soundness of this reasoning and immediately put it into practice. Indeed, as I had found no advice in Bowditch on this essential matter I decided, at the first opportunity, to type a note to him about this little practical bit of creative seamanship.

Other problems of seamanship absorbed us as the day wore on. Someone should have to stand watch all night, though there would be very little to watch. We just couldn't go to bed and let the vessel drift, however. Dorothea had got somewhat upset by the motion of the ship. Frying the bacon had made her, indeed, quite ill. Truthfully, I was not feeling so hot myself. I saw that if we were both to be seasick it would seriously interfere with the navigation of the *Canarsie III*. Of course we could lash the helm as Lord Jim or somebody had done when the niggers on the *Narcissus* had mutinied. But the prospect was none too enticing. I am afraid that my thoughts were, in this extremity, traitorous to our new determinations. For an instant I felt a sharp pang of regret that we had put the symbols of a decadent civilization behind us. In that weak moment I longed for a well-iced Orange Blossom. However, I did not make my treacherous fancies known to Dorothea. Rather I tried to bolster her courage against the future.

"Marvelous, isn't it, darling?" I smiled manfully. "I wouldn't swap our adventure for all the gold in the world."

"W-w-wonderful, sweetheart," she replied bravely, swallowing as the boat bounced recklessly about.

"Just wait until we get to our island paradise. We'll build a grass hut with our bare hands and fish for beautiful colored tropical fish and run naked, our golden bodies flashing in the sun, and lie stretched upon the beach unworried by whether George Gloptig's new novel sells five thousand copies or five hundred."

"Can't you make the boat ride a little smoother, sweetheart?" asked Dorothea, rather naively, I thought. But I loved her for it.

"Perhaps we can run in and out of the different islands and trade copra or something with the natives," I told her cheerily. "Just to kill time, you know. They've always called me a shrewd trader at the office. Remember that time I got Henry Wadsworth Smith, the guy who wrote the book on Dynamic Dialectics, to take five per cent on the first fifty thousand?"

"Yes, sweetheart. That'll be lovely. But—well, couldn't we turn back and start out some day when it isn't quite so rough?"

"Here," I said, being something of a psychologist—in an amateur way, of course. "You take the wheel for a while." I was sure that if her attention were diverted for a time the joy in our splendid odyssey must reassert itself. On top of that I just couldn't stand up straight another moment. I turned the watch over to her and promptly went aft and dizzily threw myself upon my bunk. I refused to give up. Naturally we should feel the tug of civilization drawing us at times. But we must master it. We must expunge it from our system. We—I just had time to make the rail. When I returned I felt as though quite everything, including civilization, had been expunged from my system.

I do not know just how long I lay in a hazy sort of coma on my bunk; Dorothea's cries penetrated my consciousness and I leapt up. Darkness had fallen over the sea. The sky was a Stygian blanket that blotted out my vision.

I was awed and mystified by man's puny insignificance when pitted against the unfathomable elements. The brave little craft was no longer slung about by the choppy, broken waves. Instead she skidded in long, running lunges, the ground swells spinning her up on her beam ends, then sucking her down into what seemed like bottomless wells. I felt as though I'd got caught in an elevator that was running wild inside a building designed by a maniac. Dorothea was sitting on the wheelhouse floor. The helm was spinning crazily.

"Doesn't man's puny insignificance when pitted against the unfathomable elements awe you, darling?"

"I thought you had died," she said reprovingly, ignoring my question. "I sat down for some reason that I don't remember now, and I can't get up. Isn't there a dial or lever you can set to make the boat stand up straight?"

Grasping the wheel I reassured her. I was getting my sea legs. I welcomed the opportunity to defy the magnificent fury of nature. "Everything'll be under control in a moment," I added.

"Well, help me up, can't you?"

In spite of the marvelous control I was exercising over myself my patience in this situation almost deserted me. "If I let go of the damned thing we'll turn over and dive to the bottom," I shouted. "You've got to sit some place, anyhow. Do you realize," I demanded, "that we are in for a blow? Probably a sou'wester, or a nor'easter. This is the sort of thing that tests a man's manhood."

"So what?" said Dorothea, and I detected a trace, the merest soupçon, of annoyance in her voice.

The *Canarsie III* lifted lightly in the air, then roller-coasted straight downward for half a mile; in the trough of the huge black seas she was all but engulfed. The wind howled unmercifully. The stout little craft tossed frenziedly in the sheer darkness as though it were an eggshell in a pot of boiling coffee. Sea stories invariably had the Old Man shorten canvas when weathering a blow, but as the *Canarsie III* had no sails up, this didn't seem to be much use as an emergency measure. I hung on to the plunging vessel with one hand and turned Bowditch with the other, hoping to strike some sage bit of advice. All I could read was, "The Northern Equatorial Current originates to the northward of the Cape Verde Islands." That wasn't much good.

Meanwhile Dorothea had somehow managed to clamber to her feet. There was a worried expression on her countenance. "Look, sweetheart," she murmured as a chart on the wall came loose and blew through the door and into the swirling sea, "suppose our oil runs out and we can't get back to land."

"Don't fret about that," I advised her confidently. "All we have to do is run up a tops'le and a couple of halliards and so forth and tack in."

"Tack?"

"Sure. Just run before the wind."

"Oh. I think I'd rather run after it. I've been reading McFee mostly, and he's an engineer, so I wouldn't know about tops'les. But I was thinking that if we don't know what direction to tack in what good is it?"

"Well," I calmed her, "we've got enough supplies to last a couple of days—a couple of months the way my stomach feels just now," I joked. "By that time I'll know this Bowditch backwards. Never you fret, darling."

"I know, but we may be floating in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean by then," she sighed. "Maybe we should have mastered Bowditch before we put the decadent symbols of civilization behind us."

"You've got that a little wrong, darling," I said, always a stickler for accuracy. "The symbols of a decadent civ—"

The *Canarsie III* drove herself with a stunning shock against some huge, black looming shape; there was a splintering crash and I was thrown against the opposite wall of the wheelhouse. My senses reeled. My first thought was that we had run down the *Ile de France,* followed by the conviction that we'd piled up on Cape Hatteras. Dorothea sat supinely in a corner, a puzzled frown spreading over her features. At last I took courage to make my way up the slanting deck in order to view the situation; we might have time to don lifebelts and fling ourselves overboard before the craft settled to the bottom. If we had collided with a liner she would probably lay to and pick us up before we drowned.

The black looming shape carried a row of steady yellow lights. When I had blinked my eyes for a moment I made out what looked like a long pointed metal superstructure. Dorothea had followed me.

"Say," she said delightedly, "this doesn't make me mad at all!"

I shook my head, still dizzy from the impact. I wondered what nonsense she was talking. Here we were about to drown at sea, and—and then I saw what we had run into. Beyond the structure the familiar skyline of Manhattan was dotted with its myriad twinkling lights. We had been dashed up on one of the new Staten Island piers. . . .

We are now studying Bowditch assiduously. Some day we shall sail away to our island paradise in the Caribbean, there to laze in the sun-drenched tropics. Our opinion of decadent civilization is unchanged. Maybe we just need a bigger boat.

The Battle of Blue Trout Basin

by Nelson S. Bond

For the hundredth time my line looped out gracefully, knotted, backlashed, and fell a good six feet short of the mark for which I was casting. As I started to reel it in, grimly, I heard a sympathetic clucking from the fence that bordered on the roadside.

"Listen, guy," I said to the stranger watching me, "if you think you can do any better, come on in here and try it!"

With surprising alacrity he hopped the fence and took the rod from my hands. He balanced it daintily, lovingly, and nodded his head in approval.

"Very nice, sir," he said approvingly. "Very nice equipment, indeed. But if I might be permitted to show you—"

He cast. His movement was smooth, liquid, flowing. Like a coil of rippling light the line flew out in a beautiful arc . . . tip-poised for an instant over the distant mark . . . then slithered back toward where I stood gaping.

"Marvelous!" I gasped. "How—how do you do it?"

"The wrist. It's all in the wrist movement." He tapped my own aching member with a lean forefinger. "So many try to *snap* it here. You must *roll* it—that's the secret."

I tried it. Just as he had said, the secret lay in the proper roll and timing. My own cast flicked out—not so good as his, but good enough for me—and touched the corner of the mark.

"Well, I'll be damned!" I said. "Say—how would you like to come fishing with me some time? I could learn plenty from a master like you."

He sighed heavily. In the dusk I thought I saw two great tears well from his faded blue eyes. "I'm sorry, sir," he said, "but I really couldn't. You see—I don't fish any more."

"You don't *fish* any more!"

"Never," he said dolefully, "since I fished the wonderful Blue Trout Basin."

"Blue Trout Basin?" I repeated. "I never heard of it. But what—" An almost wistful expression on his face stopped me.

"It's a long story," he choked, "and a sad one. I used to love

fishing—probably even more than you do. I went everywhere to try my hand and luck against finny warriors. I fished the backhills of Kentucky, the icy streams of Maine, the sluggish brooks of Pennsylvania. My name was on the lists of every major fishing club from Florida to Washington. I even had a fly named after me—never mind which one. There is no greater honor, sir, for a true son of Izaak Walton.

"It was upon one of my trips that I discovered the Blue Trout Basin. Never mind which state I was in. Let us merely say that it is a land of trout and salmon. A fisherman's Mecca. And there, by chance, I came upon a pool hidden deep in a wooded dell. No local fisherman had ever mentioned it, so it was with the faintest hope of a kill that I cast out over its dark, sullen waters.

"Imagine my surprise, then, when my very first cast was greeted with a strike that shot up along my arm like an electric bolt! For an instant I was stupefied—then instinct came to my rescue, and with all the caution and canniness that years of experience had taught me, I began to play what I was certain was a giant trout."

"And was it?" I asked eagerly.

The stranger gazed at me somberly. "I landed him," he said slowly, "in exactly two minutes!"

"*Two minutes!*" I exclaimed. "Why, that's impossible! Fifteen . . . twenty minutes . . ."

"I know," mourned the old man. "That's what I thought, too. But I was wrong. In two minutes, I had landed my first trout in the Blue Trout Basin. Inside of half an hour my creel was groaning with a dozen more. In an hour's time I had two gaffs, a creel, and my lunch basket jammed with three dozen blue trout—none of them less than twelve inches long!

"Now that I look back on it, I wonder that I didn't see the truth immediately. At the time, all I could think was that I had inadvertently stumbled upon a fisherman's Paradise—that more luck was mine than any Waltonite deserves.

"I finally began to understand when I noticed that it was getting increasingly difficult to walk on the bottom of the little pool. The bottom, sir, was slippery. When I looked down to learn why, I saw that the pool was covered—absolutely covered—with layer upon layer of fish! And those fish, sir—*those fish were waiting in line to take my lures!*"

A sob broke the old stranger's voice.

"You may believe it or not, sir," he wailed, "but once I broke my leader in that accursed pool. When I drew in my line to replace it, I found a trout hanging on the end of the line with the cord drawn tight around his neck! That fish had deliberately hanged himself!"

My visitor pulled up one trouser leg, disclosing a jagged, semicircular scar on his calf.

"That," he whimpered, "is where one of those demon trout bit me. That was when I tried to get out of the pool. I had caught enough to satisfy even my inordinate lust for killing—but those trout wouldn't let me go. They built a bulwark of solid fish-flesh about my legs, hemming me in so I couldn't move an inch! Two of the larger and stronger ones jumped right into my haversack. I tried to throw away my rod, but three fish impaled themselves on it before it left my hand! And I found three large trout, later, in one of my bootlegs!"

"But listen—" I began angrily.

He wiped an arm across his streaming eyes. "You see, sir," he said piteously, "those fish wanted to be caught! They were weary of life and determined to commit suicide. That's why they called that pool the 'Blue Trout Basin.' Everybody in those parts knows about the fish, and won't go after them. So when a stranger gets in the pool, the trout just go crazy. They won't let him go until he catches *all* of them!"

"So you," I said scornfully, "caught them all, I suppose?"

He looked at me with pain-racked eyes. Slowly he backed away into the gathering darkness. His voice, aged and melancholy, floated back to me from the gloom of the roadside.

"No, sir!" he wailed. "I never did get away from those fish. By sheer weight of numbers they pulled me down. Up there in the Blue Trout Basin, sir—I drowned!"

I went in the house. Quickly.

Fielder's Choice

by Edward L. McKenna

It was seldom enough that Charles J. Horton went to see a ball-game. He worked for the Third National, and from the beginning he had taught himself to remember that although a bank closes at three o'clock it doesn't pay to rush right off as soon as your books for the day are finished. No; you stay right on, making yourself useful and noticeable to your superiors. You're painfully careful about everything, and you never make an error. You take the extension courses at the University, even though you already have a Phi Beta Kappa key from the little school up-state. You attend the lectures given by the Institute of Banking. You carry the Wall Street Journal, or the Commercial and Financial Chronicle, and you read magazines that cost at least thirty-five cents. You pay some attention to your appearance, shaving each morning after your cold shower and your setting-up exercises, and your habit is costly as your purse can buy. You economize on beggars and waiters, and live at your college club, where the food is so bad it reminds you of the old fraternity-house. Still, you get the stationery for nothing, and it gives you a certain cachet, or so you imagine. Your favorite book is your own bankbook, and you put by a little every month. You don't get married, and you're otherwise thrifty, neither drinking nor smoking nor going on parties, because if you really feel the need of recreation, can't you go to the movies or a theatre or a good restaurant all by yourself? You're really much better than most other people, and you've determined to get on, and so, perhaps, you will.

The program was working well enough for Charlie Horton. At twenty-eight, he was out of a teller's cage, and back of a desk and on the slow road to fortune. He had subordinates to whom he could be distant and severe, and two thousand dollars in his savings account, and a few good bonds, though he carried no life-insurance whatsoever.

So, on this bright Saturday afternoon he was sitting behind first base, among people he rather disliked, and watching the acrobatics of eighteen athletes for whom, as individuals, he felt a faint

contempt. One of them he knew, though he hadn't spoken to him for years. They'd gone to school together. Joe Marchand had been a popular hero, and Charlie Horton had been almost nobody.

Joe Marchand was more or less a popular hero still, though most experts agreed that he was slipping a little. He played right field for the Eagles, and had batted .342 last season. His arm was still all right, but he wasn't so fast in the field or on the bases. That was to be expected. He was almost thirty.

Joe had never finished high-school. When he was seventeen, he was picking up a few dollars playing semi-professional ball, and then he played two seasons for Scranton and one in the Southern League. Somebody saw him down there, and picked up his contract, and ever since then he'd been in the big money. There'd been seasons when he'd made eight and ten thousand. It was generally understood that he wasn't getting anything like that any more, but Joe never said so. Whatever it was, he never saved a cent more than enough to take him and his wife and his three kids through the winter.

Outside of his family, the things Joe liked best were baseball, close harmony, and twenty-five-cent-limit draw. He had always been crazy about playing ball, crazy about every sort of sport, every sort of game. Boxing, horse-racing, ice-hockey, hunting, fishing, cards, dice, billiards, and even golf fascinated him always. He wasn't a drinking man, and he didn't chase around, but he did like to gamble, and to watch games, and to play them.

He weighed a hundred and ninety pounds, and his face and neck and hands looked as if they'd been dipped in some brown stain. After a game they'd won, or on the Pullman, or back at the hotel, he and Art Herman and Petey Grant would start harmonizing. Joe had a barytone voice, not nearly so good as he imagined, but he knew a thousand songs all full of barber-shop and pleasing sentiment, and he never forgot a new wow, a new combination of confluent chords. Songs in which there were two separate and distinct first-tenor parts were his delight.

The only people he disliked in all the world were fresh fans and fresh bushers, and even the bushers soon got used to Joe, and the fans didn't ride him, as a rule. Anyhow, he played in right field. Nobody took him too seriously, except left-handers; he could murder them. His one great weakness was this: he was a bad waiter. When the count was two and two, unless he had a signal, he'd be apt to take a crack at the next one, whatever it was, for to be called

out on strikes without swinging just ruined his afternoon. Also, it did not give him much pleasure to knock one into the infield, even though he scratched a hit out of it. Joe liked to sock them. From his first days in the league it was his great delight to watch the fielders playing deep for him, dropping back toward the fence and the bleachers when he walked out toward the plate. He wasn't a scientific hitter, but he certainly could lean on them.

He'd helped to win two pennants; this year, the Eagles weren't even in the first division. That didn't worry him or any of them. They were playing away, in a big town they liked, against the leaders of the league, and the Eagles didn't think so much of them, outside of their pitchers. It was a doubleheader, and the games made a difference in the league's standing, though not to them. Everybody felt pretty good. Contenders who amount to anything always like a crack at the champion, whether they beat him or not. Forty thousand people were out there to watch them, to jeer them in a pleasant enough sort of way, with the good-natured contempt of victors, even vicarious ones. It was August, the sun was nice, and not too bright, and the dry, scorched grass was good to feel beneath their feet. Some of them were kids, with years before them, some of them were on their way out, like Joe. Anyhow, they had this fine long summer afternoon.

The thing happened, in the beginning of the fourth.

Joe was coaching a runner on first, so he was nearest to it. He heard all the noise, the screaming, and turned around, and peered up at the stands behind him.

Just back of first base, the crowds were giving way to right and left, pushing and leaping. A sea of people was surging in each direction, and seats were breaking beneath them as they went, but there was almost nowhere for them to go. Out into the aisles they came, and fell upon those seated in the next section, and that in turn went rolling onward till the next aisle was reached. There was the crashing and creaking of rotted timber, the snap of arms of broken chairs, the thin sharp yelp of men in fear.

The first-base stand was collapsing.

"Hi!" shouted Joe. "Hi! Come on, you guys." With that, he went into the falling stand.

He didn't know quite what he was going to do. All he knew was that he was going where the trouble was, to do his best. There

weren't many followed him. A few policemen charged into that stand, too. Cops haven't much sense either.

There was a pretty bad fifteen minutes or so in there. Maybe it was only ten, maybe it was only five. It didn't turn out to be so serious. Only a little part of the stands had actually fallen. Twenty-two people were killed, and about a hundred injured, not counting scratches, and black eyes, and torn clothing, and nervous systems somewhat impaired, or strengthened. Some five thousand men had looked suddenly upon the face of death. It leered at them, and as quickly turned away, and it only cost them a dollar apiece, and a bruise or two.

Joe came out of it all right, except that his right arm felt sort of funny. He hunched his shoulder up and around; it still felt funny. "Wonder how I got that?" he said to himself. He wouldn't have known. He'd made three or four trips into the middle of it, yelling and cursing, and pushing and pulling, and trying to do whatever he could. He remembered getting one man out from underfoot; the *Record* said he got three.

The shoulder was dislocated, he found that out at the clubhouse. "Tough luck, Joe," they said. "Ah, a coupla weeks," he said, to them, but to himself he said, "That's curtains. That's curtains."

It wasn't curtains. He played ball again, plenty of it. What was more, the owner of the club came to the hotel, the next day, with a copy of the *Record* in his hand.

"This true?" he said.

"No. It's my press-agent," said Joe.

"My daughter was in that stand," said the owner.

Joe looked at him.

"You go in there, you have no call to go in. You cripple yourself, for the sake of other people. All right. You got a job with this club, as long as I'm in baseball. Bum wing, or no bum wing. You hear me?"

"Yeah," said Joe. "Your—your daughter O. K.?"

"Yes. She's O. K.," said the owner. His name was, and is, Ben Siegal, and he is known to all the world as a soft-hearted, hot-headed sentimental slob who'd rather lose money in baseball than make it brewing beer.

There's a line in that *Record* story that Joe has never noticed. Under "Dead" there is this: Horton, Charles J. 28. Bank clerk, employed by Third National Bank.

The Atavism of Ralph Piscatore

by Robert J. Kuhn

He was born in the third month, under the sign of Pisces, and his name was Piscatore. Italian descent, they say, but a third-generation American. Ralph Piscatore was a lonely man.

Why he should have been lonely is hard to say. The depths of a man's soul are often as impenetrable as the ocean deeps. And the soul of Ralph Piscatore was a troubled thing, not to be soothed by the caresses of his wife, nor diverted by her ceaseless harangues. Piscatore walked the earth with a heavy tread, and his business associates feared him. For this man was set apart.

Now in the third month of a certain year, Ralph Piscatore did a strange thing. He left the home in which he had watched his wife raise three sturdy children, and took them to a new home far to the south, on a spit of land in the State of Florida, near to the Gulf of Mexico. He had caused a home to be built on the edge of the blue-green water, and here, under the fierce-friendly sun of the semi-tropics, Ralph Piscatore found peace.

The peace he found was in the water. In the strong salt spray of the southern sea, Piscatore found tonic for his spirit. He was a big man, not Italian in grace, and had trouble with his feet. But in the water his powerful shoulders found their use, and he cut through the breakers with long, swift strokes. The battle against rough water was exhilaration; floating in the calm was peace. He let the water surge over and around him. He let it lull him to quietude.

Love of the sea became set in the mind of Ralph Piscatore. It obsessed his mind, drove him to build an aquarium into the walls of his home, that he might study the movements of fish and other sea creatures. There was a purpose in him, though he never spoke of it. He ignored his wife and studied his fish, for they could teach him how to swim.

Hour by hour he studied their movements; then he would lumber into the ocean to contort his muscles in futile imitation. Though he could not imitate the fish, no man in the land could swim as well as Ralph Piscatore. This he knew, and reveled in the knowledge.

More and ever more of his time he gave to the water, and less to his obligations on land. Day after day he went out for his swim, and he would remain for hours. As his wife's fears for her children's security increased, she berated him more fiercely; and Piscatore would turn to the water for surcease. He swam the surface, crawled along the bottom and disported himself in the waves. He found happiness there, and his fixation grew. In time he began to hate to come out, even to come up for air. And so he would hold his breath until he reeled under the hammer-blows of his heart; and gradually he developed great lung power. The day came when Ralph Piscatore could imitate his fish under water for several minutes at a time.

Now on his natal day, in the third month of the last year, Ralph left his home and walked to the edge of the water. He shed his trunks and waded through the shallows, then launched himself out toward the Gulf Stream. He swam for several minutes, till he found his favorite spot, and he dove deep and clung to a projecting rock.

It was here that he often found pleasure, for certain fish had grown accustomed to this man's presence and ignored him. Ralph Piscatore could watch them in midst of life, not captive in a man-built tank. Watch them he did, on his natal day in the third month of the last year. Watch them until he lost track of time, forgot his bursting lungs and need for air; forgot his need to cling to the rock, and he followed them in their quest for food.

How did this come to pass? Ralph Piscatore was not aware. So absorbed was he that the hours swam by and the sun long crossed the meridian. And all the while, Ralph Piscatore sat under water and watched the fishes.

A multicolored sea cow passing above his head caused Piscatore to look up, that he might see it well. And as he looked, his mind took note of the fact that no bursts of air were bubbling from his nostrils. No pressure forced his body toward the surface; no pain racked at his lungs. This man who loved so well the graceful fish was now at ease among them. His heart beat was steady; his lungs content. For through his ears seeped air-filled water; and the atavistic fish gills of the third embryonic month were functioning smoothly, as did those of his ancient fish-mammal forbears ten thousand generations before.

The shock of such discovery made Piscatore giddy, but this

soon passed. He was eager to accept this miracle, for he considered it nothing less. Piscatore laughed aloud, but no sound carried through the water. He flung himself forward and down, toward a coral reef that had always been beyond his reach. As he approached the rock, a gentle muscular twist swerved him gracefully up and over; spreading his arms, he halted his forward movement and came to rest directly above the reef.

A grey shrimp, sensing the shadow above it, scurried under the rock. Piscatore was pleased by the tribute. He twisted down along the ocean bed and investigated a large cavern he found in the coral. Refracted sunlight created a dim haze within. The atmosphere reminded Piscatore of a smoke-filled night club—and the cave was equally crowded. Even the activities of the fish were reminiscent: males pursued, and females tried, not too hard, to escape. The cavern evidently was a favorite spawning place. Piscatore studied the coral shelving, the sea worms in the walls. He idled beside fat sunfish and avoided the eels. He noticed a passing sea trout, which bore a marked resemblance to his younger son. The same disdainful expression; a kind of shocked superiority. Ralph grinned. He wondered if he could mention it to his wife.

Come to think of it, would she even believe all this had happened? No. His friends? They would have him in an asylum within twenty-four hours.

This was a sea horse of another color! The situation called for serious consideration.

And as he pondered, there passed along his spine a quiver of fear—some atavistic instinct, reinstigated by his new environment. Without hesitation he flung his body sharply to the left, just in time to avoid the lunge of a blue-nosed shark. Inertia carried the shark forward a few feet; it turned and lunged again.

Piscatore found his bulk a handicap in the comparatively shallow waters around the coral reef. His new-found agility was strained by the vital test. Cornered, he held himself ready and timed his turns like a matador in the bull ring; for were he to dodge too soon, the shark could swerve in time to run him down. Desperately he sought some avenue of escape. Direct flight was out of the question, for fast as Piscatore could swim, the shark was faster.

Evening had begun to cast greying mists through the water before the fight was done. Once, when a close lunge left the shark's body unguarded, Piscatore flung his full weight against the fish,

cutting the shark's belly on the coral reef. Thereafter, the shark made one more feeble attack, suddenly tired, and left the scene. The dimming light hid from Piscatore the trail of blood that oozed and blended with the water, but a saline sensation in his gills irritated him, and he fled. From out of a clear blue sea came sharks and barracuda, smelling blood, to finish the wounded shark.

Slowly then did the man named Piscatore swim toward the shore. For the first time he realized clearly the dangers of his new life, as well as its pleasures. Yet within him pulsed the pleasure-beat of conquest; he had done well.

And now he was tired. He had earned his rest, and he looked forward to an evening before the open fire, a hot supper and a warm bed. Even the rasp of his wife's voice he could recall with pleasure. She would nag him for his unexplained absence, but he could afford to smile. He might even take her. That, too, would be good.

He swam directly onto the sandbar that shelved gently into the beach, and when the water was barely deep enough to cover him, he started to emerge.

But this day of miracles had not ended for Ralph Piscatore. For as he lifted his head from the water, a strange thing came to pass: he could not breathe.

Under the protective waves once more, he sucked the water through his gills, and gave oxygen to his aching lungs. He tried not to think; not to fear; and once again he lifted his head out into the air . . . and almost strangled. He could not breathe the air he sucked in, for it was foreign to his body. The atavism of Ralph Piscatore was complete, and only the functioning gills of the third embryonic month could serve his need for oxygen. He fell back into the water like a man stunned.

Long did he remain near the shore of his home. Lifting his head, he could see the lighted windows of his study, and his wife's silhouette as she peered out anxiously. In time she caused a searching party to put forth a boat, from which they cast nets. Ralph Piscatore swam slowly out to sea when they came his way, for he knew now that he was lost to dry earth, and capture would mean only death. Fear was in him, and sadness, too. Yet another thing as well: a sense of relief. But this was buried deep, and he gave the night over to mourning.

Rather than face facts, he sought to deny them. And so, in terror, he told himself that this was all no more than a madman's

dream, brought about by passion for the sea and its creatures. This he repeated to himself until he was lulled beyond fear, and hunger drove him to hunt for the grey shrimps that have shining eyes in the dark.

And so the night passed, and when dawn came, the black shadows crept swiftly back and down, into the depths of the sea. And with the coming of sunlight, hope reflamed in the heart of Piscatore. Hope of returning to his old way of life was gone, and with it went regret. Already memory of his life on dry earth was beginning to fade, for the sea takes care of its own. And Ralph Piscatore was soon too occupied in his new life to consider long the old.

A new sense of freedom broke his bonds with the past; he realized his power. Now it was given to one man and to one man alone to ken the secrets of the sea. No limit of time or space shackled his study. His powerful body swept rhythmically along with the ebb tide, and he sought the ocean deeps. No more would Ralph Piscatore stumble over clods of earth; no longer would he be content with the shallows. His were the depths of the ocean, where pressure was a comfortable thing and the world existed in three dimensions.

This, perhaps, was the essential difference. For while on land, Piscatore moved forward and back, and occasionally sideways, rarely was he concerned with height or depth. Yet in the ocean, as in the sky, the three dimensions were co-equal. Not only was Piscatore free to move forward, down, back, sideways and up, but every movement was a combination or variation of all.

He revelled in his prowess, and would fling himself upwards and out, then dive fast, whirl on himself and shoot forward like a bullet.

After such play he would rest quietly, deep within the comfortable nest that is the under-ocean, deep enough to rest upon the pressure below and around him, with every muscle gently upheld. There he could float, more completely relaxed than is possible for any creature outside the sea.

Rested, he would hunger, and life immediately became a quest, a vital game. No more did Ralph Piscatore search for the unclean grey shrimp or the filth-loving crab. Clean, sleek, full-bodied fishes in the swiftness of life were his sustenance now, and he sought them out in schools and alone. Black sea bass he sought; bluefish, snapper and jack; chiro, snook and salt water trout. He stalked them like game; was often hungry and rarely sated.

Now it came to pass, in the present year, that a fishing vessel was put to sea; and in it rode determined happy men. And when they found themselves far out to sea, deep within the Gulf Stream, they cast forth lines and caused many small fishes to be taken into the boat. These they lamed, by deft splitting of fins; and cruel steel barbs were passed through each fish's body, where they caused pain, but not death; and where they could not be seen. The two and five pound fishes were then set free, at the end of a long line, and swam slowly back and forth, dying. The happy, determined men smiled at each other, and called the dying fishes "bait." Good bait. A hungry shark took one, tore his snout on the hook, and disappeared. The fishermen waited patiently, and baited another hook.

Thus it was that Ralph Piscatore, intent upon his hunger, came upon a small school of fishes idling to and fro beneath and beyond the shadow of a boat. Seeing him approach, they darted away. Piscatore circled cautiously. The boat he recognized as belonging to a former neighbor in the town called St. Petersburg, in the State of Florida. He was called by the name of Hebbard. Piscatore had hated him, because he carried on him the smell of fish that are dead. A spasm of that hatred and fear passed along Piscatore's spine, and he swam swiftly away, almost a quarter mile.

It was then that he noticed a lone red snapper resting almost directly in his path. His hunger swept away all thought of the boat and men, far behind, and he flung himself toward the small fish. The snapper saw him come, and strove frantically to avoid the rush. But his clipped fins weakened, and Piscatore took him in a single gulp.

The steel hook was embedded in Piscatore's belly before he was aware of it. The rush which captured the snapper for him had carried him on almost fifty yards before the barb tore into the lining of his stomach and brought to him the taste of his own blood. Then a mighty jerk brought his rush to a stop, and he became aware of the heavy cord that fed into his mouth and down his throat, and the agony in his belly wiped out all thought.

After the preliminary rushes, which failed to dislodge the embedded hook, Piscatore tried to seize the cord and break it, but he was helpless. Somehow he could not bring his arms forward into position to seize the line. He tried to snap it with his teeth, but it was too strong. The blood bubbled up through his throat and he

dove for the bottom in frenzy. Down and down he plunged, the line tearing open the corner of his mouth; yet he would not stop.

He would not stop, until he was stopped; until the line drew taut and held him, and a spasm of pain drew the blood from his eyes, and his stomach came loose inside with a sickening tear.

* * *

Time is a player of tricks. It does not move by the clock: it speeds or dawdles, according to the situation, and man-made clocks can only strike an average.

How long was it, then, that Piscatore fought for his life? How long, but a lifetime? Only this could it be, and the hours mean nothing. He fought with his belly, with his muscles, his lungs and his back. He plunged and struggled up to the very last moment when the steel gaff was plunged into his chest, and he felt his hot heart-blood gush from his side out into the dark blue foam-flecked water. This was his last conscious memory, before the darkness closed in: the look of the water, dark blue, there in the Gulf Stream, slipping away below him as he was hauled aboard the fishing boat.

And in the boat the determined men were happy, and they laughed, and slapped Frank Hebbard on the back and shoulders, for his, they said, was surely a prize catch, indeed: a blue marlin, of uncommon proportions and unquestionable courage.

Beware the Tremper Buck

by Edmund Gilligan

At noon a white gale came blustering through Stony Clove, scouring clouds of shining crystals off the frozen drifts. An hour later, a new snowfall began and soon the peaks and timbered summits of the Catskills vanished in a welter of flakes.

The great buck, wandering far up the slope of Wittenberg, moved deeper into the pine forest. His antlers clashed against the green boughs. Hunger kept him uneasy, a hunger close to famine. He had wintered poorly. His rich autumn fat had gone from his ribs and his coat had lost its brightness. The hair of it stuck out drily here and there and a rusty patch spoiled the splendid curve of his haunches.

He panted and groaned. He thrust his mouth into the bed of pine needles and coughed over the dry, tasteless browse. He stopped in an open space and let his head hang low, as if he had no strength to hold up the beautiful spread of antlers. He sagged there a little while, then pushed his way into the lee of a fallen hemlock, where he waited, snuffing the wind.

At twilight, when the snowfall ceased, the deer walked wearily to the tumbledown farm below the forest. He tossed his head upward against the boughs of an apple tree. A russet apple, scarred and frozen, thudded into the snow. He rolled it out with his lips and let it lie. He pawed into the snow and turned up a rift of dry grass. There he thrust his muzzle and heaved until he routed out a sound apple, well preserved in a tuft. He ate it, tore savagely at the dull grass and champed his dry, famished jaws.

A rifle shot echoed on the southern slope. He turned his ears that way, then walked through the orchard and leaped the stone fence of a bullpen at the side of a ruined barn. There, sighing and snuffing, he searched in shallow snow under the eaves, where he had often found good suppers of sweet hay and clover on days like these. He butted his head in anger against the rotting eaves. He suddenly wheeled, climbed into a breach where frost had thrown the wall, and rammed his forefeet into the hard drift there. He looked down into the Clove. Lights shone in the cottages of the Vly.

Below him, where the mountain joined the valley, the chimney of the hunting lodge sent sparks slanting into the dusk. The buck, a bronzelike mass against the sky, held his head out straight and blew. His loud snort sharpened into a long, whistling blast.

His call ran pell-mell in and out of the caverns, speed in many echoes over the drifts, and beat against the windows of the lodge, where the hunters sat by a hearth red with embers. One of the hunters, the ancient and honorable Grandfather Doonan, walked impatiently up and down the hearthside, striking his hard hands together in angry vexation. Despite his silvery hair, the old lad was as slim and strong as a boy of twenty and could stay on the bear's trail longer than most men. He could think faster than any man in the Catskills, but tonight his thoughts, which were with the great buck in the barren snow, were not satisfying him.

When the deer's signal cut through the sifting noise of blowing snow, Gaffer Doonan once more struck his hands together, then held up his right hand in warning. He turned his troubled, frosty-blue eyes toward the window. "Did you hear that, Jan? Did you hear it, Fahim?"

Jan, grandson to the old sportsman and a lively chip off the Doonan block, lifted his red-thatched head from the rifle barrel on his knees. And Fahim, who had long since abandoned Turkey and its fleshpots to follow Gaffer on the Catskill trails, nodded his swarthy head. He looked out through the wintry pane.

Gaffer gave his spiky moustache an angry tweak. "It's the old one all right. It's the Tremper Buck. His father taught him to whistle like that. Ten to one—he's browsing around in the old bull pen and wondering where his hay can be."

Fahim came back to the hearth and kicked back a fallen log. "We should have gone up last week, Gaffer. That drought—it was worse for him than it was for the trout. I'll bet his ribs are showing by now."

"Take it easy, Gaffer," said Jan, looking shrewdly down the rifling of his gun. "He'll last till morning. We'll put old Woolbeater and his horses up for the night and get the hay up the mountain at daybreak. We ought to thank our stars some stranger didn't get a shot at him. One day more—and then the season's over and that's off our minds."

Gaffer stamped his boot heel down on the hearth. "There'll be no waiting until morning, Jan! If there's a clear moon—up we go

tonight. Best be careful in these hard times. Or we'll be stuffing a starved-out hide just as I stuffed his dear old father long ago." The old lad turned swiftly toward the door and whispered: "Now what in thunder can that be? A hunting-horn—or I'll eat my shirt!"

Fahim flung open the door. Up the lane came a team of horses, heaving and blowing against the traces. Behind the load of hay, a pair of headlights shone and every now and then the horn of the blocked motor car sent out a noisy bugle call. The hunters heard the driver shouting angrily to old Woolbeater, who sat aloof on his high load. Once he turned and cried: "Ain't going to do ye any good, Mister. Blow away. If ye can't take it easy—why, take it easy as ye can."

Old Woolbeater slid down, pulled a handful of hay from under the canvas cover, and handed it to Gaffer. "Take a chew of that, Mr. Doonan. If that's not the sweetest stuff you ever fed the Tremper Buck or his dad—why, my name ain't Woolbeater."

Gaffer tasted the wisp. " 'Tis good, friend Woolbeater. You did well, considering the lack of rain. Now pull into the barn and bait your horses. If the moon comes clear, we'll finish the job tonight. The old boy has been whistling up there for us."

Gaffer then turned to the driver of the car, who stood waiting at the door. "You, sir," said Gaffer. "What can we do for you?"

The stranger, a plump, hard-faced customer in a coonskin coat, looked hard at Gaffer. "Are you Gaffer Doonan?"

"I am, sir."

"My name's Fiske. Captain White said he spoke to you about me at the City Club a while ago. Said you might put me in the way of a little hunting."

"Captain White? Ah, yes. Welcome to you, sir. You come pretty late in the hunting season, but do come in and take your nightcap with us."

Gaffer introduced his companions and Lorenzo, the lodge steward, trotted into the room with a tray and hot jug. Gaffer filled the mugs, handed one to the stranger, and drank with him. The stranger, without a by-your-leave, poured himself another mug and sent it shooting down.

"Smooth stuff, Doonan!" he said. The toddy drove a quick flush into his cheeks. The mug shook in his trembling hands.

When he stretched out his hand to the jug again, Jan sent a

secret signal of alarm to Gaffer, came closer and whispered: "Your friend has been taking a little too much. Unless I miss my guess."

After the fourth mugful, the stranger spread his legs out in front of the fire and, with a belch or two to start off, said: "Don't mind telling you fellows that I'm a new member of the club down home and I mean to present the house committee with a fine pair of antlers pretty soon. I don't mind telling you that's my aim. That's why I come up here."

Gaffer politely remarked that this was an admirable ambition. He added: "No use counting the points, sir, till your buck is down."

The stranger puffed red and began some pretty tall talk about his being a crack shot and how he had knocked over a bull moose in some yard or other up in Canada. The Doonan band couldn't stand a boaster and they were all getting a little dark in the face when a fist struck at the outer door.

It was old Woolbeater. He stepped in, walked right over to the jug, poured a drink, and said: "Moon's up bright and clear. I'm ready to feed that buck, if you fellows are. Come along, won't ye?"

"Feed a buck!" The stranger roared in unseemly laughter. "Are you fellows stringing me along? What do you mean, old timer? Feed a buck!" He emptied his mug. "I'll bet you're going to take a shot at him when the moon rises. Or maybe you're going to jack him. What's that lantern for? That's it!"

Gaffer leaped to his feet. Jan put a hand on the old lad's shoulder and soothed him. He then turned to the stranger and assured him that they were, indeed, going to feed the buck. "It's the Tremper Buck, Mr. Fiske. An old friend of ours. None of us would think of taking a shot at him. He trusts us."

"The Tremper Buck!" The stranger's eyes went hot. "I've heard of that one. Is it true that he's got such a spread on him? Over twenty inches? I saw the old Tremper Buck set up at the inn. They say his son is even bigger."

"Quite true, sir," said Fahim. "Indeed, if you would like to come along with us, you might catch a glimpse of him feeding."

The stranger pulled on his jacket, took a flask from his bag, and climbed onto the load of hay. Old Woolbeater urged the horses on and they pulled into the mountain road. By the time the team turned into the gateway of the tumbledown farm, the moon was out, bright and clear. Woolbeater took the hay forks out of the load and they all set to work.

They drove away then and went down the road a piece. There the farmer pulled up and Gaffer led the hunters into a spinney of elms near the barn. In a few minutes they heard a branch break in the apple orchard and then, walking boldly in the moonlight, the Tremper Buck appeared, snuffing and throwing his beautiful head up and down. He leaped high over the pen wall and began to feed on the hay hungrily.

The stranger whispered excitedly. His eyes glittered while he watched the handsome antlers gleam in the frost. He pulled his flask out and swallowed its contents. He swore harshly at the burn of the liquor.

Back at the lodge, Gaffer led the stranger to a cabin and then turned in for an uneasy sleep. The queer drunken intensity that had marked the stranger's face rather worried the old lad. So, as soon as the green flush of dawn came up beyond mount Touch-me-not, Gaffer hurried over to the stranger's cabin. He rapped at the door and cried out: "Good morning!"

No answer came. Gaffer rapped again. He then pushed the door open and looked in. The stranger had gone. His gear lay scattered around the room, but his rifle was not there.

Gaffer shouted an alarm. He hauled Jan and Fahim out of their beds and roared for Lorenzo. Quickly they drank down their coffee, pulled on their snowshoes and started off for the abandoned farm. Snow began to fall. It had fallen in the night, too, and their trail of yesterday lay hidden. But they hadn't gone far before they found the stranger's tracks, where he had gone slogging along.

Gaffer bent down and looked at the marks. "Fresh made!" he cried. "After him, boys. Don't take no back talk from him. Just knock him down and hand him over."

They ran on through the rising storm. The wind hurtled out of the North and blew big soft flakes against them. Gaffer suddenly stopped. When the others came up, he said: "Even a crazy man like that won't hunt in such weather. I can't see a yard ahead of me. Watch out now. He'll be coming back."

Ten strides later they heard an angry curse ahead. Fahim slipped to one side of the trail and Jan followed. Gaffer threw himself into a drift. They were scarcely hidden before the stranger came plowing by. He spoke many a hard word as he clumped along.

They let him go. When he had vanished, they kept on his trail

to the old farm and found the place where he had lain under the eaves of the spring house, waiting for an easy shot.

"Damn his eyes!" said Fahim.

"He's a tough ticket," said Jan. "But we can't stand guard over the buck all the time. I'm going to ride that guy out of the valley."

Gaffer said nothing. He put on his thinking cap while they trudged back to the lodge. Once he cried: "Ha!" and began to think again. And then he said: "He'll be back, my lads. There's no preventing that. The law's on his side and the law isn't on the buck until sundown. No, Jan, don't drive him away. Then we couldn't keep an eye on him. First thing to do is to try eloquence. If that fails, sterner measures must be used."

The stranger, confronted with his guilty action as he straddled on the hearth, made no bones about it. "Who the devil are you," he roared, "to tell me I can't take a shot at him? Just because you're fattening him up for yourselves. To be shot out of season, I'll bet."

Jan gasped, then leaped to his feet. Gaffer held him down and turned to the stranger. "I just want to warn you, Mr. Fiske, that you're heading for trouble. Captain White told you at the club about the Tremper Buck, I suppose, but there's lots he didn't tell you. That's no ordinary deer. Do you think we'd bother our heads with a run-of-the-woods buck? No. Take my advice. Go elsewhere and get yourself a buck while there's time. I don't want to seem mysterious, but if you go after that deer again, something will happen that will astonish you. Not that we mean to do anything about it. The law's on your side. But the Tremper Buck knows no law. And he'll settle your hash for you. Mark my words."

The stranger poured himself four fingers of whiskey. "You can keep your rotten cabin," he said with a pretty snarl. "I almost froze to death in it, anyway. And I'll take the Tremper Buck—if it's the last thing I do!"

He stalked out of the lodge and went swearing and scuffling to his cabin. He gathered his gear and drove off toward the inn.

"And now what?" asked Jan.

"Yes, Gaffer," said Fahim. "What now?"

"Leave it to me, my lads," replied Gaffer. "I've been expecting this and I've been thinking very hard. That brute has it coming to him and I'll give it to him." He shook his head and added: "If he

lasts long enough, I mean. I never saw a man so close to delirium. The D. T.'s, as they used to call them when I was a boy."

"Gaffer!" cried Jan in horror. "You're not going to drink him under the table?"

"I could. I could. But I wouldn't take a drink with a guy like him. And it won't be necessary. He doesn't need any help." He pulled on his jacket and added: "I'm going down to the village to talk with some of those clever mechanics down there. I'll find out how hot they are, all right. All you lads have to do is get into the old farmhouse kitchen about dusk and keep your eyes peeled. Bring your rifles—in case of accident."

Jan and Fahim shook their heads in doubt and despair as they watched him go. They sat around the fire most of the day and then took up their rifles and started off for the mountain. Halfway up the road, they found a team of horses and a sledge pulled up. Old Woolbeater stood alongside. He grinned when they questioned him and replied: "Just been doing a little hauling for the old man. Can't tell ye what. Promised not to." He winked. "Going to wait till it's over. Must take back what I took up."

The two hunters crept into the farmhouse kitchen. A snowfall began and came thick enough, now and then, to shut off their view. Fahim walked up and down the boards, beating his long arms about to keep warm. At one turn, he looked out the window and gave a sudden groan. "Here he comes, Jan."

Rifle in hand, the stranger came creeping into his lurking place. A squall hid him from sight, then the air cleared and they saw him spread out under the eaves, his rifle sighted. He brushed the snow off his cheeks, which were blue with cold. Again the snow drifted over the spring house in a long flurry and hid him from their sight.

The stranger lay there for ten minutes, his bloodshot eyes fixed on the bullpen. He drank from his flask. And then, sharp and clear, a whistling sound blew down the mountainside. He raised his rifle and waited for the wind to clear the way.

Presently the air cleared. He peered over the barrel and grunted with an evil joy. Clear and beautiful against the grey sky, the motionless and noble figure of a buck stood, his forefeet planted on the frosty wall. One handsome, glassy eye stared upward at the storm-ridden hemlocks. The other seemed to be casting a hungry sort of glance toward the banquet of hay. The light was so dim that

the antlers were not clearly visible, but it was easy to see that they were magnificent.

The stranger, terribly excited by this wonderful appearance, growled at his trembling hand. He aimed at the buck.

"Tremper Buck, eh?" whispered the assassin savagely. "In just one-tenth of a split second, you'll be a buck no more!" He ran his tongue over his dry lips. The rifle wavered, but he showed that he knew a thing or two. He took his time. He kept his look of crazy expectation fixed on the noble head against the sky. But he held his fire and waited for his nerve to settle.

"Damn you!" whispered the stranger. Slowly he lifted his rifle, slowly he drew his bead.

Just as he was about to squeeze the trigger, something happened that made him go white with terror. The buck, still gazing downward blandly and without the slightest sign of fear, cried out in an extremely courteous tone: "I beg your pardon, sir, but may I ask if you are, perhaps, aiming that weapon at me?"

The stranger's drooling mouth gaped. He groaned terribly; and then he roared so loudly that Jan and Fahim looked out from the kitchen window, their eyes bulging. The stranger tried to speak. All he could get out was a meaningless whisper, and then: "What? What's that?"

"Come, sir," cried the buck. "Be good enough to speak up clearly. My hearing isn't what it used to be. All these guns banging day and night, you know. Kindly answer my first question: is it your intention to discharge that lethal weapon in my general direction? I advise you to think twice before you do. That's all I have to say."

The stranger, fighting hard to keep some sort of grip on himself, lunged forward a step and gibbered in a miserable fashion. "What in the devil's name is this?"

The deer's marvelous eye gleamed in the snowy dusk as he replied in majestic calm: "This, my dear sir, is the Tremper Buck, of whom you have doubtless heard. At least, you have heard of my papa, who still lives, in a way, at the Vly." The Buck paused for a tender sign of remembrance. "My father was a great deer. Really, sir, a remarkable fellow. He could read quite well." He sighed once more. "Never learned to write, though. As I have."

The stranger looked wildly toward the darkening sky. His rifle slipped from his hands. He beat his fist against his forehead and

then, in a panic, gulped from his flask. "Am I mad, at last?" he moaned. "Oh, hell-fire!"

"No," said the buck in an even, measured tone, "you are not mad yet. But you soon will be. At present, in my humble opinion, you are suffering from over-indulgence in alcohol."

"Damn your hide!" yelled the stranger, reaching for his rifle. "Mad or not, I'll—"

"Be good enough," interrupted the deer, "to leave my hide out of this. It's quite as good as that pasty skin of yours. In fact, it's superior, being considerably older and made of the best Catskill buckskin."

The stranger cursed and lifted his rifle.

The season will be over in a very few minutes," observed the buck. He again let loose a melancholy sigh. "Too bad that I can't escape the dishonor of being shot at by a rascal like you, but I'd never run from a miserable, sneaking, unsportsmanlike good-for-nothing drunkard. Which is what you are, my friend." The buck took a deep breath and then added in an off-hand manner: "The dope probably can't shoot anyway. So why worry?" A gleam sprang from his steadfast eyes. He then addressed the stranger once more. "I beg your pardon, but before you shoot such an extraordinary deer, one who has studied hard and apparently in vain, may I ask you one question. Before answering, I must warn you that in a minute or two the season will be over. May I? May I ask?"

The stranger, looking much, much sicker and even more doubtful of his sanity, weakly whispered: "Yes." To himself he said: "Am I mad? Talking to a buck? Oh, hellfire!"

"Thank you sir," replied the buck. "Just tell me—yes or no—can you hit the side of a barn door?" At this sally, the buck roared with laughter. A festoon of snow fell from his great antlers. Without waiting for a reply, he shouted: "I must warn you, sir, that if you miss—and I'm positive you're going to miss—I intend to jump all over you. I may, in fact, scatter you all over the—"

At this moment, which was even more than critical, Jan and Fahim, choking with laughter, heard the door at the right open. Gaffer, holding a microphone in one hand and dragging a wire in the other, whispered: "Can you lads think of something decisive to say? I'm stuck—and we have only a minute left. Or less."

Fahim grabbed the microphone and at once let loose a first-class Turkish hunting whoop.

Jan, staring out of the window, groaned.

A dire and dreadful thing had taken place. Another buck had arrived. Snuffing the fragrance of the hay eagerly, the newcomer bounded through the orchard and brought up with a trumpety snort of astonishment when he saw the great antlers spread before him and the glassy eyes staring away and away. The buck turned to flee; then, his curiosity whetted, he jumped forward and stretched his muzzle out until it almost touched the other's mouth.

The stranger gave another gasp, which was nearly his last. But he had learned much by now and he knew what to do. He raised his rifle in the dim flow of the last light of the sun. He shrank against the springhouse and calmly laid the rifle barrel on a beam that stuck out there.

In no way disturbed by this unexpected arrival, the elderly buck said in a sweet, sad, low voice: "Ah, my son! You come at a grievous hour. Your poor father is about to receive his death blow." He sighed again and, in a still sadder tone, "Shoot, if you must, this old, grey head, but spare my little son," he said.

The stranger, muttering some awful phrases about not being a fool any longer, aimed his rifle and this time he drew the deadly bead on the new arrival, who stood stock still as he tried, in his deerish way, to figure out the fascinating puzzle before him.

Jan, seeing that the game was up, shuddered and placed his hands over his eyes. Fahim began to swear in a choice combination of Turkish, French, and Cockney.

Gaffer, who never was able to see when the game was up, picked up Jan's rifle and fired a quick one from the hip. The bullet smashed through the window and went ripping under the Tremper Buck's belly. A sliver of ice drove the buck into a high leap. He came down on all fours and whirled around, madder than a she-bear.

The stranger fired. His bullet cracked off a point of the elderly buck's horns. In an instant, the Tremper Buck, enraged by the second shot, flew over the stone fence and plunged headlong toward the stranger who screeched and flung his gun away. He fell on his face and rolled into a gap of the springhouse wall as the buck's forefeet lashed murderously down.

Gaffer kicked out the window panes and fired into the air. The buck whirled again and trotted off into the forest.

Gaffer ran to the springhouse. He pushed a slab of bluestone over the gap and thus sealed up the stranger neatly. He thrust his head down and yelled: "You all right, Mr. Fiske?"

The stranger spluttered.

"Didn't I warn you?"

Another splutter, hotter and louder, came from the dark crannies. "You let me out of here."

Gaffer sat down. "That buck tell you he could write?"

"You know damn well he did."

"Don't you believe him," chuckled Gaffer. "He's the worst liar in the Catskills. He can't write even his own name."

The stranger roared. "You let me out of here."

Gaffer looked at his strapwatch. "Sun sets officially in one minute and a half, my friend. You just wait right there."

The snow began to fall faster. It drew a screen over the forest and over the statuesque buck on the bullpen wall. Just as the snow hid him from view, he laughed quietly and then said with an accent distinctly Turkish: "It is now two minutes past six o'clock. The season is over and all is well."

Gigue for Hunting Horns

by Reed Johnston

Captain Ransom Huxtable, late M.F.H. of the Bowlby, stood before the mirror in his dressing-room and surveyed himself with gloomy wonder. It was late; it was almost midnight; yet he wore the pink coat and corded trousers of the hunting field, the velvet riding-cap, the buttons of the Bowlby; all complete except for the whip. And here his costume diverged sharply from tradition: he carried a shotgun.

He carried a shotgun and he was about to commit that blackest crime of the hunting field—that offense which would exclude him forever from the friendship and society of his kind—he was going to shoot a fox. It was a bitter ending to a long and brilliant career.

The season—his twentieth—had begun auspiciously. Cubs abounded; hounds were in fettle; farmers were complacent. The membership was excellent too; all keen hunters and expert horsemen, with never a lubber to mar the field. And the Master himself, Captain Huxtable, he was reaching the very zenith of his powers. Everything pointed to a particularly brilliant season. Then the trouble began.

It began in the shape of a certain slant-eyed vixen with the Devil in her who grew up, so to speak, under their very noses in the Bowlby meadows and who, once she had reached young maturity, promptly refused (with the Devil's help) to have anything to do with the game of fox-hunting in any form. She was wise above other foxes. She could run faster. And she was apparently invulnerable. That was clear from the first.

Rarely would she run before hounds, and then only to their confusion. No stratagem was wily enough to outwit her. She seemed even to be assisting other foxes, what time hounds were pressing them, for every scent somehow, sooner or later, became inextricable from her own; she invariably split the pack forty ways from Sunday—a feat indeed, for they were expert—and left them yelping foolishly in every direction but the right one.

Sometimes she would simply disappear—*spurlos versenkt*—

in the middle of a stubble field. Once she leapt out unexpectedly from behind a stone-wall and nipped the leader of hounds on the ear. Another time, when they seemed to be hot on her heels, she was discovered loping along busily *behind* the field, and not in front of it as the rules prescribe. And then—crowning audacity—she had the habit of going to earth occasionally in Squire Thorpe's poultry-yard, where, except for the unhappy cackle of fowl, no trace of her could be found thereafter.

Nor were the poultry unhappy without reason. Every night she selected for her supper the fattest, tenderest young hen in the yard, varying her diet frequently with one of the Squire's prize China ducks. And this was all the more unfortunate since Squire Thorpe's voice was law in the Bowlby. Squire Thorpe's purse maintained the Bowlby. And Squire Thorpe was no man to suffer in silence. He spoke his mind to the Master as they came hacking home.

"This has got to stop, Huxtable!"

"Hmm-mm," said the Master.

"You hear?"

"Yes," said Huxtable. "Yes, I hear."

"Or we are in a fair way to become the laughing-stock of the countryside!" Captain Huxtable kept silent for a moment.

"That is no ordinary vixen," he said presently. The Squire puffed angrily.

"No, and that is no ordinary poultry she is filching, either! I must say it is a pretty state of affairs when the owner of the best pack in the countryside stands at the mercy of every fly-by-night vixen that comes down the road. A hen a night, I lose—sometimes a duck—and all because of one blasted little vixen. Why she can't pick on some of the farmers, *I* don't know!"

"You have the best hens," said the Master.

"Yes, and I have a pack of mumble-footed hounds that ought to be able to protect them, too!" Squire Thorpe turned to look sharply at the Master.

"You keep chickens, don't you?"

"Yes," said Huxtable.

"Ever lose any?"

"Why, no-o-o," the Master admitted reluctantly. "No, can't say that I have."

"Seems funny," said the Squire sourly, and then the conver-

sation ended abruptly for that day. They discovered the very culprit in question, trotting happily at their horses' heels and (they could only suppose this) listening to every word they said.

From then on events took on an uglier color for Captain Huxtable. The vixen began to make up to him. Somewhere near his house she appeared almost daily now, when hounds were in kennel. The muddy garden was covered with her footprints and the scent of her kept the kennels in constant uproar. Once at night she even scratched at the house-door, apparently asking to be let in. And there was every evidence that she had made friends with those neutral parties the horses, for she seemed occasionally to sleep in one or the other of the stalls.

All this the Captain knew, and kept to himself. But the word got round. Dark rumors were spread. Had the Master perhaps got him a fox for a pet. Had he perhaps trained her to eat other people's chickens? Or bring them home to him even—a sort of back-handed retriever? These were the outrageous rumors that spread through the Bowlby, and still the Master kept silent.

"Lost any hens to that vixen yet?" the Squire asked him one day.

"Why, no-o-o," said Huxtable. "No, I can't say that I have."

"Funny," said the Squire. "She hangs around your place a lot too, doesn't she?" That very day the Master went in to the city.

He returned though, late the same night, and with him he bore a small wooden case with a handle at the top and screening on the two ends, such as animals are packed in for travel. This he carried furtively to the hen-yard; he fumbled with it for a moment in the dark, and hurried into the house.

When he came out next morning there was a hub-bub in the yard. Grooms and a huntsman were bent over in a huddle, examining some object on the ground. Near them lay five dead hens in a row.

"So the vixen got them at last, did she!" said the Captain, almost joyously. The huntsman straightened and shook his head.

"Can't blame her for this, sir!" he said. The men stepped back now, and for the first time Captain Huxtable saw what had perplexed them. It was a ferret, and dead also like the hens, with its neck bent back at a sorry angle and its creamy fur spotted with blood.

"This?" cried the Captain. "*This!*"

"Yes, sir," said the huntsman. "I know their style, I do." He pointed to the hens. "T'wasn't no fox as done *that!*"

Captain Huxtable turned wildly back to the ferret. "But this," he faltered. "This ferret—what's happened to *it?*" And, as the men kept still, he added, "A hound?"

The huntsman shook his head. "You may well ask, sir," he said sternly. "And if you was to ask me I'd say it wasn't a hound but a fox—a vixen!" The men behind him muttered their agreement.

Captain Huxtable let his arms fall weakly against his sides. "My God!" he whispered. "My God." Then he turned and tottered back into the house.

It was all up with Ransom Huxtable; he was through. He knew it. Still for a little while he tried to go through the old motions. He redoubled his efforts in the field; he resorted to every stratagem he knew to catch that vixen. Only unfortunately she redoubled her efforts, too. She ran rings around the Bowlby; she had them in a daze before the week was out. Her poultry-tax was raised on Squire Thorpe, and now she took two of his hens each night instead of one. Her attentions to Captain Huxtable were increased a hundredfold.

Now when he went for an afternoon canter she loped beside him, so that all the countryside might see his shame. When he went for a drive in the trap she trotted beneath its wheels, in passable imitation of a well-trained coach-dog. As for dogs themselves, no single one—no pair even—had the appetite to confront her; when the pack was let loose she was off and away like a wraith. Finally the Captain took to the house and stayed there when hounds were not running.

Then at last she dealt them such a blow as no hunt could rally from. One night of her own accord—the kennelman saw her but realized too late what she was about—she opened the kennel-gate and took the bawling hounds for a midnight gallop which extended clear into the next county. At least the hounds were found there, footsore and weary, late the next afternoon. And in the evening, when word of this came back to the Squire, he called his M.F.H. for a conference.

There was no burst of volcanic anger from the Squire; no fire of any kind. Indeed he looked definitely old as he fumbled in his pocket and drew out a telegram. It trembled perceptibly in his

hand as he held it out to the Master; it trembled in the Master's hand as he read it. The message was signed with the name of a rival hunt, and it contained one short, jeering sentence: "Congratulations on your new mascot."

"You see, Huxtable," said the Squire.

"I see."

"*They know.*"

"Yes."

Squire Thorpe blew his nose gustily. "I have decided to get rid of my hounds, Huxtable. Getting old, you know."

"Oh, no," the Master protested. "I wouldn't say that."

"Ye-es, getting old." He held out his hand to the Captain. "So this is the end of the Bowlby. No hard feelings, Huxtable. I blamed you for a while—now I don't know what to make of it."

"No more do I," said the Captain. He clasped the Squire's hand; then he turned away and left the house. Near it a small shadowy figure stepped out from behind a clump of evergreens and followed him home through the raw spring night. He was not unaware of her presence.

When he reached the back door of his house he turned for a moment and shook his fist in the direction of the garden.

"You wait," he growled.

Upstairs in his dressing-room he began hastily to change his clothes. It was late; it was almost midnight; yet he donned the full regalia of the hunting field: the velvet riding-cap, the pink coat and corded trousers, the buttons of the Bowlby; all complete except for the whip. In place of this he carried a shot-gun, and now that he was ready he paused before his mirror and surveyed himself with gloomy wonder.

He was going to shoot that fox. By that one act he would exclude himself forever from the friendship and society of his kind; but he was going to do it. Turning sharply from the mirror he hastened down the stairs and out into the garden.

She was still there waiting. Once his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness he saw her quite plainly, her own slant-eyes gleaming in the faint light from the upstairs window. They did not move or waver as he raised the gun. He held them full in range for a moment. Then he fired.

And before the echo of the shot had died away in the garden the sob in his throat burst forth. With a cry of despair he flung

the gun aside and turned stumbling toward the house. As he did so a small brisk figure crept out of the shadows and trotted after him to the door. When he turned to close it he saw her there on the step, the mask spread in a friendly grin, the bushy tail wagging faintly. She was quite undamaged, and she looked into his eyes with steady confidence.

Then it was that Ransom Huxtable knew what course the Fates were pursuing; knew that his destiny was somehow bound up ineluctably with hers. She would be with him always, and whither he went there (like Ruth) would she go also. He knew this with a definite feeling of relief, and for the first time in many days he raised his head defiantly and smiled. Softly, so as not to frighten her, he stepped back from the door and beckoned her into his house.

"Come in," he said. "Come in then."

It is not to be supposed that she understood the precise meaning of his words, but the gesture was unmistakable. She trotted confidently into the house and Ransom Huxtable closed the door behind them.

Dodie's Duck

by Walter Clare Martin

This morning I received a copy of *S. R. A.—B. S. 83*, issued by the Bureau of Biological Survey, a promulgation of the national duck law.

In this important booklet I find innumerable rules, regulations, statistics, etc., etc.; but I note one deplorable omission. Nothing is said about the duck-hunting activities of Coyne McCreagh of Coon Ridge, whose experience, I think throws more light on the federal conservation program than all the leaflets you could set a match to.

It was not jealousy, I am sure, which inspired the Bureau of Biological Survey to ignore Mr. McCreagh so effectively. More likely they considered him outside their scope, because, that hazy dawning of November, he did not set out to hunt ducks.

The truth is, he set out to hunt rabbits.

He set out with three rocks, having no civilized arms except an erratic muzzle-fed musket. And for the musket he had no munitions.

He talked some of borrowing a Twenty-two from the Flints; but they lived a right smart down the holler. Besides, they might not have any bullets. The Flints' shotgun had been reduced to historic scrap-iron when Bud fired it with snow in the snout.

So Coyne equipped himself with three rocks, round and cold, about the size of baseballs.

It is a matter of record that such missiles, addressing a rabbit broadside, may derail him with catastrophic effects.

So Coyne McCreagh, crunching the frosted leaves, stalked from one brush-pile to another. Into each pile he peered, and each pile he kicked hard with the heel of his home-soled boots.

Coyne was no Houdini, however, and the rabbits failed to appear. Two rocks chunked heavily into his skunk-perfumed coat, and the third chilled his throwing hand until it stiffened.

Coyne shifted this rock to his right perfumed pocket and rubbed his hands between his legs with much vigor. He then put his hand inside his pants pocket to warm it against his thigh.

A rabbit some thirty-odd feet away, blurring into a background of buck brush, sat watching these human maneuvers. With the

infernal perversity which animates all cottontails he waited until Coyne's throwing hand was tightly tucked into his pants, then he jumped like a guilty conscience.

Coyne caught the insulting white flick of his tail as he scooted between the rough legs of the forest.

With a startled "gawd blast!" Coyne wrenched free his hand and fumbled a rock from his coat. He hurled it with desperate violence.

The beast was too far, and the total effect of the throw was to increase his ambition to travel.

Coyne McCreagh's body sagged as he watched the meat disappear.

"I'm sure sorry, Dodie," he said.

This Dodie, as the Biological Survey should know, was Coyne's young faithful wife, very expectant. She expected a baby, in three or four months, and today she expected a rabbit.

Budgetty matrons whose caloric adventures begin with the telephone, who live neighbor the year round to smiling vendors of T-bones and sidewalks piled high with fresh spinach, can but weakly conceive what that rabbit meant in the life of young Mrs. McCreagh.

Six weeks she had rationed on salt sowbelly and corn-pone, with slippery-elm bark to chew, when too hungry. Dodie needed no Johns Hopkins guide-book to tell her she was not doing right by Coyne's baby. Her stomach, without publicity, turned upside down and the mountain bloom began to fade from her cheek.

It had reached such a crisis, Dodie had said to her man:

"If you don't get some fresh meat, I'll take fits."

That was why Coyne said he was sorry. He did not want his young mate to take fits. He did not want his heir to be born chicken-breasted or too crooked to swing a man's ax.

He was sorry, but he tightened his rawhide belt and trudged farther on, down the hollow. He probed and kicked every brush-pile. He thrust twistin' poles into old secret logs. He circled patches of briar-bush and peeped under bunch-grass, and the one thing he did not find was a rabbit.

"'Taint no use," he muttered. "They clubbed 'em too close."

Just to keep the Biological records straight, this "clubbed 'em too close" referred to the winter before, when a fifteen-inch snow

smothered the Ozarks. A vast horde of pat-hunters, with clubs and with dogs, waded out and enjoyed a snow massacre.

From Coyne's county alone, 50,000 dead bunnies were piled upon trucks going east.

A great week! Kettles simmered. Coins clinked in surprised pockets. But it so happened that not one of those 50,000 dead bunnies laid an egg to be hatched the next Easter.

Great sport for the pot-hunters; but now Coyne tramped the hard hills without sighting a living creature. He began to doubt the one flicker of fur he had seen was anything more than a ghost. A rabbit ghost haunting the scene of the massacre.

Hungry, chilled, disillusioned, he paused on a bald knob to take bearings. He could see his home smoke, miles across bristling gulches, and told himself he should be there, chopping firewood.

But Dodie was expecting a rabbit.

Off south lay the river, smeared with fog like whipped cream. Some ten or twelve miles, by the tumbling road half a mile to a crow, or an airplane.

An automobile horn sounded along the ridge road, across the still vale from Coyne's knob. Sportsmen, probably, bound for the duck blinds. Lordy, lord, couldn't Coyne eat a duck! Dodie could eat a duck, too, he reckoned. How her anxious brown eyes would light and dance if he came swinging a fat duck by the neck.

It burst over Coyne, then, that despite war, flood, and damnation he was going to get Dodie a duck.

Furiously he plunged into the hollow. Through bramble and briar, through sassafras and blackjack he made for the nearest arm of the river. If he could get to the blind before the sportsmen arrived, he could offer to work—for a duck.

The car beat him, by a couple of minutes. The hunters were dragging out guns. Automatics, pump-actions, double-barrels, all sizes and chokes—Coyne never had beheld such an arsenal of shotguns.

Three men in the party and three guns to each man: short range, middle range and long distance.

The financier of the party was Lawrence Bogart, husky-voiced, impatient, red-shaven, meat-fed; a man who had inherited much and made more. He operated an overall factory.

The other two were physicians—Doc Pyne and Doc Smith. One

lean and sardonic as a wolf at the door; his fellow thick, swarthy, coarse, friendly.

They were transferring luggage from the car to the blind. Coyne McCreagh hurried up, half winded.

"I reckon I could help you unload," he said.

Bogart sized him up.

"How much?"

"I'd do it for one mallard duck," said Coyne.

The thick, friendly Doc laughed:

"You like 'em better than I do."

Bogart said:

"Can you keep your mouth shut?"

"A feller can't talk with his mouth full o' duck," said Coyne.

"Very shrewd, indeed," said the wolf.

"You're hired," said Bogart. "Just do what we want, and you'll eat duck till you quack for a week. There's a bonus, also, at the end of the day, if everything goes off smoothly. All right, pitch in. We'll unpack the car and run it into the willows. Then lug all the stuff to the blind."

Coyne McCreagh pitched in, his heart singing. He was quite willing to quack for a week.

The junk was unloaded; the big car concealed; and the four men laddered into the blind. It was half sunk in lush clumps at the shore of the stream, warm and roomy, finer far than Coyne's cabin.

There were shelves for tall bottles; built-in boxes, bug-proof; fold-up couches; wall lights, operated by electric dry cells.

Coyne asked several questions about these smart lights, resolving to buy one for Dodie's Christmas.

As the program progressed, the men talked and drank. Coyne inferred that Doc Pyne was a novice. He was an expert skeet shooter, and office partner to Smith, who was striving to out-doorize him.

"When do you put out the decoys?" Pyne said to Bogart.

"Not legal this year," said Bogart.

"What about your phonograph records?"

"They're legal if made from mechanical quacks; but not legal if made from live fowl."

"Which are these?" inquired Pyne.

Bogart spun a phonograph disk with his thumb.

"I didn't ask, when I bought them," he said.

They tried out the records. Quack, quack, quack, quack—a

lively medley of friendly duck voices. Coyne would have sworn, had he not been standing there staring at it, that the river was swarming with mallards.

"Guess I'll plug my guns now," said Bogart.

"Plug?" said Doc Pyne, puzzled.

"Sure thing, that's the law. Repeating shotguns must have their magazines plugged to three shells. A damned silly thing, if you ask me. We have a bag limit of ten. Since we can take only ten what the hell does it matter if the gun shoots five loads or three?"

"Five loads would be better, I reckon," said Coyne.

"Why?" all the hunters looked at him.

" 'Cause the more shots in a gun the less the number of flocks would be banged at to fetch down the limit of ten. That means fewer bunches is disturbed from their feed. It's breakin' rest and feed that hurts most."

"The man is right, Bogart," said Smith.

"Maybe so," said Bogart, "but it's no hair off my neck. I know how to beat the law—legal. Three loads in three guns are nine loads, as I figure. Here, McCreagh, you take charge of these two extra guns, and when I reach, hand 'em to me—like this."

He practiced Coyne in the art of gun-passing.

Smith was boring the sky with a hand telescope.

"Mallards!" he cried. "Drop the roof."

Bogart pulled a lever which let down the grassed roof. The men snapped to their shooting positions. Through the sloping glass panes, camouflaged with tall reeds, they could scan the smoking face of the river.

Smith set the phonograph calling. Coyne held the gun ready to pass.

A triangle of mallards dipped down through the haze to discover the source of the quacking.

Disappointed, they rose and circled the woods, their hollow wing-bones whistling, "Follow."

"They're gone," complained Pyne. The others signalled him "Hush." Soon the birds reappeared, dipping lower.

"They're tired," whispered Bogart. "Next time they'll drop."

The air in the room seemed to stiffen.

Around came the ducks, stretching, eager; convinced that no foe lingered near. They supposed the friendly ducks, whose voices they heard, were concealed somewhere in the weeds.

The shrill whistling ceased as by signal. Nervous wings relaxed in midair.

Tail rudders snapped down to check landing speed. One instant they hung in suspended power as if a still camera had caught them The instant hunters rave about in their sleep.

Up sprang the camouflaged roof of the blind. Fire and thunder shattered the picture. Scatter loads, choked loads, and long range charges of shot ripped to pieces the gallant formation.

Surprised by the furious cannonade, the ducks climbed away from the death trap. Courageously they re-formed their torn ranks. Leaving wounded and dead whom they were unable to help, they cut a swift path through the ghostly haze and steered for less sinister waters.

The dead mallards and wounded, of all degrees, floated on the white water like lilies. The boat lay concealed at the weedy shore of the stream; but the men made no attempt to retrieve.

One by one the fine dinners for which Coyne would have given his cornfield headed into the strong flow and shot down. He stared at the ducks and the boat and the men. When he could endure it no longer, he blurted:

"Ain't you aimin' to fetch in them ducks?"

"Hell no," said Bogart.

Coyne hesitated a moment. To him the idea was incredible. Enough dinners to support him and Dodie for two weeks were drifting away, for the turtles.

It must be a mistake. He persisted:

"Don't none of you fellers enjoy to eat duck?"

The men were annoyed, and showed it.

"Sure we like duck," said Bogart, "but we like shooting a damned sight better. If we picked up all the ducks, we would about have our bag limits and be heading home before we got started. We won't have our bag limits until sundown."

Coyne's hungry jaw stiffened, indignant.

"It don't rest my mind none," he retorted. "That's the way it went with the rabbits. Last year they was growin' on every bush and nobody showed 'em no mercy. This year you can tramp till your tongue hangs out and not get enough hair for your eyebrow."

Bogart growled irritably:

"There's plenty of ducks."

"They ain't," said Coyne, "and if they was, this kind of business would soon blot 'em out."

"Take a drink and forget it," suggested Smith. Pyne added:

"It's strictly our business; and strictly within the law."

"Lawful or not," said Coyne, "It ain't right. Wild game to you fellers is just something to bust; but it's serious meat to us here in the hills. It ain't right to waste meat and it ain't right to let cripples float off and die slow."

"We can't get 'em," said Bogart, "they are too far out."

"Loan me your boat," said Coyne, "I'll fetch 'em."

"Like hell! and get us all in a jam. This river is patrolled by state and federal men. One might chance along any moment."

"Let 'em come," said Coyne, "I ain't breakin' no law."

"Then for your information," said Bogart, "it is unlawful to use any kind of boat more than one hundred feet from the shore."

Coyne gaped: "Is that the law?"

"Yes, that's the law," they all nodded.

"It's a damn' funny law, I reckon," said Coyne, "if a man can't pick up shot birds."

"There's a lot of damned funny laws," said Bogart, "but we manage to have our fun. And this particular law suits us just fine; it's an excuse for not picking up birds."

"I don't like it," said Coyne, "it ain't right."

"And I don't like lectures," said Bogart. "We won't need you any more today. Here"—he held out a one dollar bill.

Deliberately Coyne turned and climbed from the blind; ignoring the proffered pay.

* * *

Again Coyne found himself on a ridge; alone, cold, rabbitless, duckless.

Instinct urged him to go back home; eat cornbread; chop wood; get warm. Pride told him to keep on trudging.

His eyes toured the hills for suggestions. The nearest smoke flew from the roof of the Flints, two or three hours across hollows; tough going.

The Flints, he recalled, had a rifle. They might have a cartridge or two. Coyne knew a place, down the river, where frog-weeds grew on mud flats. There often fed ducks; which a man could approach, if he used enough patience and cunning.

Resolutely he scraped down the hillside and worked across the

oak deeps towards the Flints. It was mid-afternoon when he sat astride their worm fence and shouted at the clay-chinked log cabin.

It was bad manners to approach without shouting.

At his voice, mongrel dogs set up a fierce brawl. In the doorway a sockless woman appeared. She turned and spoke to Squirrel Flint —patching boots by his fire—and Squirrel Flint shuffled out to meet Coyne.

Squirrel Flint, tall, fibrous, bald, weather-warped, hard, made Coyne think of his old hickory ax-handle.

Coyne skipped the weather and all the usual small chat, and told Flint why he had come. He wanted a gun to hunt ducks.

"I'm plumb sorry," said Squirrel, "but my shotgun is broke. Buddy stodged some snow in the muzzle."

"I reckon you don't have no ca'tridges for your twenty-two target," said Coyne.

"I mought," said Flint, "but you would be wasting vour time. You can't fetch no ducks with a rifle."

"I mought fetch down one," said Coyne.

"With a heap o' luck maybe," said Flint. "We shore wouldn't need no bag limit for ducks if everybody used a single-shot rifle. I won't say a feller can't do it; but you shore need to take plenty of pains."

"I aim to take pains," said Coyne.

Flint got the rifle and six twenty-two shorts; of which Coyne borrowed three. He declined an invitation to cider. Flint's cider was ripe and went to a man's eyes. Dodie's duck required him to shoot straight.

Coyne warmed his raw hands at Flint's fireplace; and looked briefly at Flint's 'possum pelts. He then struck with gaunt strides through Flint's turnip patch, on the last leg of his march to the river.

Almost to the river, keeping close under shade, he saw a flock circling the fog.

He listened: the mud flats were quacking. He crouched until the flying birds settled from sight beyond the tangle of high weeds and willows.

His heart bounced. Dodie's dinner was waiting. Indian-like he moved forward, half crawl, half run, towards the thick dank vegetation below.

He made it without being seen. In the willows and poison white sumacs he paused and held open his ears.

No ducks jabbered now. His hopes trembled. A dog, a loose rock, a fishing boat on the stream would fill the fog with a wild hurry of feathers.

He had borrowed a cord from Flint's rafters. He tied a loose loop and slung the gun on his back, to avoid jabbing mud into the muzzle.

Belly-flat in the herbage he wriggled along like a crocodile with a man's head. Inch by inch his muddy track lengthened. The closer he wormed to the edge of his cover, the more pains he took to be noiseless.

Light broke, at last, his screen thinning. He could see the frog-flats just ahead. Half a hundred gay water fowl disported themselves—mallards, blue-wings, mergansers, and sprig-tails.

Wet and shivering, Coyne huddled behind a drift-log and studied the situation. A single-shot rifle—one chance. The nearest duck was a teal, a bright blue-wing cock, wrestling with a live fish in the puddle.

About fifty yards to the teal, Coyne figured. If the gun was any good, he could hit it. But a teal was small profit; just one tempting bite, and beyond that teal, ten yards, sat a mallard.

Desperate, like any gambler who stakes his world on one throw, Coyne decided to try for the mallard.

"Now gawd damn you, little rifle, shoot straight!" He nosed the sly weapon across the drift-log and laid his right eye in the sights. The front bead appeared to blur slightly. Slowly, cautiously, holding his breath, he withdrew the gun from the log. With his bandanna, he wiped off the fine web.

Again the determined muzzle crept over the concealed log. Again Coyne rose into the sights. He pinned the bead on the sheen of the lusty drake's wing, on the whistling bone that carries mallards to safety.

Tenderly he tightened his finger. The rifle let go its canned death. Powder smoke stung his eyes as the flat roared into air and the sycamore tops sprouted feathers.

Coyne jerked his breech bolt, forced in the fresh load, and fired his farewell at the mallards. His slug punched a harmless hole in the zenith. He shoved in his third cartridge and turned his mind to the flats.

There lumped his duck, dead as a doorknob.

A fine human pride caroused in his chest as he hurried to take up his bird. The muddy sop was adhesive.

He squshed. Ankle deep in frog-pudding he retrieved the big drake and imagined what Dodie would say.

A motor-boat came rippin up-river. Two men in warm clothes scanned the shores. When they glimpsed Coyne, they swerved, swung the boat up a slough, and split the weeds within a stone's throw of the hunter.

They stepped from the boat with a business-like air, their legs sheathed in high boots. They came over.

"Did you kill that duck with that gun?" said one.

"Sure did," said Coyne, "plumb center."

The spokesman showed his credentials.

"You're under arrest," he said.

"Get into the boat," said the other.

"Hey! Hold on!" said Coyne, "you fellers got the wrong hunch. I bought my license last June. I got it here, in my shirt pockets."

"License or no license," the first officer said, "you killed a duck with a rifle. That's a violation of the federal law."

Coyne gawked.

"Crazy or not, that's the law." The man reached into a pocket. He brought forth a soiled copy of *S. R. A.—B. S. 83* and read pointedly:

"*. . . migratory game birds may be taken during the open season with a shot gun only.*"

"Get into the boat," the other man said.

Coyne stood, staring queerly at the duck he had shot. Then he blurted:

"I tell you what, warden. Let me take this duck home to Dodie, my wife, then I'll cheerful go with you to jail."

"Can't be done," said the spokesman. "That bird is evidence now. It is proof you have violated Regulation Three which provides for the protection of wildfowl."

"Get into the boat," said the other one.

Coyne walked to the boat, his face tightening. The mud pulled with a loud sucking sob. The men took his duck and his rifle and seated him in the bow end of the boat.

They pulled from the flat, towards the current.

Up the river a sudden noisy bombardment gave Coyne his farewell salute.

A Gamecock Doesn't Forget

by Edward Jerome Vogeler

NEVER DOUBLE-CROSS a chicken rooster! Don't do it Brother, because he won't forget you. But, when I say "chicken rooster," don't think for a moment I am speaking of a dunghill barnyard fowl with feathers on its feet, white ear lobes, a heavy comb that flops over one eye and a posterior that when plucked looks like a pinch neck bottle with a hole in it. To chicken men, and I don't mean poultrymen, such vermin are simply soup meat, and damned insipid, unpalatable soup meat at that.

No, when I say chicken rooster, I am speaking of a gamecock, the only fowl a "chicken man" will recognize and, incidentally, the gamest, noblest creature that remains on this earth. And just because his skin is drawn tight over his face and can't wrinkle in scorn when you do him dirt; just because his eyes gleam with an eternal fire that never varies—don't think he won't know it if you deal seconds on him and don't think he won't remember it.

Gene Tunney once said the most skillful boxer is a rank amateur when compared with a fighting cock—or words to that effect. A pretty sophisticated observation that, but it doesn't go far enough. What Gene failed to say is that a chicken rooster knows a lot of things besides fighting and that he speaks a language all his own, a language that serves his needs fully as well as our own jibber-jabber serves ours. Let me illustrate:

Twenty years ago, when I had a hell of a lot more ambition than I have at the moment, I studied French, German, Spanish and Italian and after about four years of intensive work I reached the point where I could walk into a restaurant, point to something I wanted and ask the waitress to "gimme a piece" in any one of the four. But —I have been studying "chicken talk" for more than thirty years and am still virtually inarticulate. The only conclusion I can reach is that it is more difficult to master than most of the lingo employed by humans in squawking for what they want.

To be sure I know that "Da gock, duck duck!" means "What's going on here?"; that "Ka tuck! Ka tuck tuck!" means "Come see what I got!" and that "Duck, duck-a-da-gerawarawk," accom-

panied by a crooning, lowered inflection of the last syllable and a scraping of the left wing, means "Baby, I could go for you in a big way," or some universal equivalent. But, I have never been able to interpret, much less to voice, the shrill message of warning which a chicken rooster sounds when a natural enemy hoves in sight; nor have I ever been able to understand how in hell he can tell a goshawk from a buzzard from a distance of two hundred yards.

There is one thing, however, I have learned about a chicken rooster, and that is he has a memory like an elephant. You find this hard to believe? Then let me tell you the story of the first of the Bens.

My brother and I were introduced to chickens about thirty years ago when my father's gardener threw a pair of sixes after drinking more than his daily ration of a quart of moonshine and his unhappy widow succumbed a few weeks later to a broken heart and the remnants of a five-gallon jug. It was very sad, and to make matters worse, this good couple left behind them a dozen asparagus plants and a flock of about twenty chickens—all in dire need of attention.

My brother and I ignored the asparagus as too deep for us, but did throw an ear of corn to the chickens whenever we thought of it and occasionally collected an egg. This state of affairs continued for several months and may have kept on indefinitely had it not been for the arrival at our place in the sticks of a stranger, a gaunt and grisly individual about sixty, with bushy eyebrows, gnarled hands and eyes that gleamed with a strange fire. For a long time he gazed at our contented flock and at last he spoke:

"Where did yez get them fowl?" he asked.

"We inherited them," I explained.

"Well," went on the stranger, "yez may of in-herded 'em and yez may of stole 'em, but wherever and however yez got 'em them's game fowl—and damn good ones at that, or I miss me guess."

This meant nothing to us at the time and we were beginning to believe our visitor might be slightly touched in the head, a feeling that grew when suddenly he pointed with a trembling finger at our first chicken rooster and asked with an excitement that was obvious:

"How would yez like to fight that cock, boys?"

"Fight him?" my brother replied. "What do we want to fight him for. He ain't done us nothing."

My brother's English, which has improved but little through the years, hurt me, but his meaning was apparently clear to the stranger who smiled tolerantly.

"I didn't mean for yez boys to fight him," he explained. "I meant, how would yez like to put him in the pit?"

Ah, the tragic ignorance of youth! Today, I blush with shame when I must confess that at that time neither my brother or I had any inkling of the fact that cockfights were held every Saturday night at O'Conner's pit at Highlandtown and every Tuesday and Thursday on the Washington road. But the stranger was patient, sympathetic and understanding.

"I'll tell yez what I'll do. boys," he said. "Let me fight that chicken rooster for yez, and if he win I'll give yez five dollars."

"What if he lose?" my brother asked with a shrewdness not uncommon in those of small learning.

"Well, if he lose, ye still got soup meat."

This impressed us as more than fair and the bargain was struck. The stranger carried away our first chicken rooster and two weeks later returned carrying a burlap bag.

We expected him to dump an inanimate mass of feathers which we planned to bury without ceremony, so you may judge our delight when he tenderly uncovered our inherited bird.

Ben the First, named in honor of my father's heavy drinking gardener whose last name doesn't matter, looked none the worse for wear. Although his appearance had been altered, as his hackles, sickles and wing feathers had been clipped to fighting trim, there apparently wasn't a scratch on him. And his fierce eyes glittered with a more wicked light than ever, while his denuded bottom shone with the ruddy glow of an autumn sunset.

With a tenderness one might expect to find only in an octogenarian papa with his twentieth born, or in a cockfighter with a twenty-time winner, the stranger deposited Ben the First upon our lawn which he immediately proceeded to tear to pieces with his long sharp claws, meantime calling together his flock—of which he spared not one.

> "Nor life, nor death, he deemed the happier state,
> But life that's glorious, death that's great."

What a magnificent creature was Ben the First, that early day of his prime. What grace, what beauty, what indomitable spirit.

My brother and I gazed at him with a fond rapture almost equal to that of the ancient cockfighter. Although we did not know it at the time, we were already bitten with the fever, that burning love and veneration of the undying spirit of a fighting cock and so engrossed were we in admiration that we almost forgot business matters. But the stranger remembered.

"Well, boys," he said, withdrawing a well-worn purse from his hip pocket, "I guess I owe yez ten dollars."

"Ten dollars!" we repeated in chorus. "Why, we thought you said only five."

"That's right," the old man agreed, somewhat sheepishly. "But, ye see, he win his first fight so quick I decided to fight him again without cutting off his heels and in just one more shuffle he made another dunghill jump the pit."

Ten dollars! To two country boys whose sole worldly possessions consisted of a flock of game chickens of which we still knew little, and a dozen rapidly withering asparagus plants, this was significant cash. We thanked the stranger effusively and invited him to call again.

It was perhaps a month before he accepted this invitation and this time he told us of a big main to be fought at Back River between two "prominent parties," one of whom had seen Ben the First win twice in one night and wanted to enter him among his show of fifteen cocks. For this, we were offered ten dollars, win, lose or draw, and again we assented and again Ben was returned to us, apparently without injury.

On three other occasions that winter Ben went away to the wars and each time the gaunt stranger brought him back with fresh laurels and a new bank note to add to our rapidly accumulating wealth and then late in February, towards the close of the cock fighting season and the opening of the breeding season, Ben left us for the last time. To be sure, he came back once more a winner, but this time he didn't escape unscathed. There was a tear in the old man's eye when he took him from his bag.

"Boys," he said, "your cock got uncoupled in the first pitting and nothing but gameness saved him. I been fighting cocks, man and boy in this country and Ireland for nigh on to fifty years and I never seed a gamer fowl."

As we returned Ben to his hens, we understood what he meant. Although there was not a whit of the fire gone from his proud bear-

ing his defiance contained somewhat less authority and it was easy to see that he was sorely wounded. There were scars on his head and breast, many of his beautiful feathers were broken and he was unsteady in gait.

"He won't never be fit to fight again," the old man informed us, "but he'll make yez a g-r-r-and brood cock. I'll give yez twenty-five dollars for him meself."

We declined this offer and thus was born one of the greatest strains of fighting fowl in Maryland cocking annals. Ask any of the old timers about the Bens, the sons, grandsons and great-grandsons of Ben the First. Ask them about "Middle-Sized Ben" that, at 5:07 won four fights in one night without cutting off his heels—and never receiving an ounce weight advantage in any battle. Ask them about Big Ben that won the challenge shake fight at the Mason-Dixon Line, or about Little Ben that won twice the same night—giving away a pound on his second match. They will tell you no gamer, finer fighting fowl ever grew.

Our success in breeding this super-strain of game fowl was due entirely to beginners' luck and an amazingly simple system. Possibly, among the flock of hens we inherited was Ben's own mother, and doubtless there were included many sisters and aunts of this great chicken rooster. But we knew nothing of their blood lines and even less of the fine points of single mating, inbreeding, line breeding and Mendel's law of heredity, so we let Nature take its course. The hens stole their nests, reared their young in the woods and the ancient law of the survival of the fittest culled the weaklings.

Meantime, Ben ruled supreme, the cock of the walk, pensioned for life, and so beautiful was he, now in full plumage and completely recovered from his injuries, that cockfighters from miles around visited our place just for the joy of looking at him. He would never fight again—or at least so we thought. And then it happened.

One of Ben's sons, hatched in the woods, reared in the woods, had reached the age when life meant glory. He had seduced a few stray pullets and had established a dukedom of his own and each morning, when Ben sounded his strident challenge to the world, this stripling would flap his wings from the top of an oak and call back: "Who-in-hell-are-you?" Of course, such insubordination could not be tolerated, and one day Ben decided to chastise the youngster—

a decision that, with game fowl, could mean but one thing, a fight to the death.

We found them that evening, side by side at the edge of the woods, the youngster dead and Ben so near death that but a flicker of life remained. Both of his eyes were closed, his head was swollen to double size, half of his plumage was scattered about the battle field and in a hundred places the short but cruel natural spurs of his offspring had inflicted wounds that were fevered and festering.

Heartbroken, we carried him home. For three weeks, we fed him bread and milk, beef tea and other readily assimilated nourishment and for a month we bathed and treated his wounds and at last nursed him back to a point where he could stand and walk weakly about his hospital pen. But, he was but a shadow of himself. He had lost two pounds weight, his comb was pale and shrunken, his plumage dull and faded and his interest in life at low ebb. And it was just at this time that my father decided to move to the city and we were confronted with the problem of disposing of our chickens.

We solved this by aranging with a commercial poultryman to take care of our hens and pullets for the eggs they would lay, plus a small fee, and distributing the stags among members of the cocking fraternity. But Ben presented an individual case. For him, to whom we had pledged a life pension, it was necessary to find a quiet retreat, a place where there were few hens to foster and no dunghill roosters to fight. This was a difficult assignment, but at last we believed we had found it.

About three miles from our place resided a gentleman of color, whose estate consisted of a dozen young, a spavined mule, a two-acre potato patch and a flock of nondescript chickens. Among this flock was one adult dunghill rooster, an ignoble creature with scaly legs and raucous voice whose death warrant we signed when, after having completed arrangements for Ben's board and lodging until he should die of old age or until such time should arrive when we might take him back, we instructed the black man to eat his own absurd barnyard fowl.

The day we brought Ben to his new home, the skies were clear, the sun was shining bright and there was no warning of the tragedy that awaited. We took him from his carrying case and gave him the freedom of the walk. The dunghill hens eyed him with a phlegmatic lack of interest characteristic of dunghill hens and there appeared

nothing to interfere with the program of peace and quiet for our glorious warrior during his convalescence. And then, we saw it!

Overlooked among the Negro's flock of chickens was a frying size dunghill cockerel with feathers on its feet, white ear lobes and, even at that immature age, a heavy comb that flopped over one eye. Moreover, this preposterous monstrosity wore a tassel on its head and its ungainly posterior swayed with an undulating motion like a bed of pansies in the breeze. In its stiff, disjointed gait were symptoms of rickets, and in its hideous plumage were indications of Leghorn, Plymouth Rock, Buff Cochin and a dozen other soup meat ancestors. But now, as Ben the First prepared to assume jurisdiction over the Negro's place, this inane incumbent of the chicken roost cackled an hysterical challenge.

"Will you just look at that dunghill scrub?" laughed my brother, who felt as I did that he knew just what was going to happen. Ben would take one swipe at its rear end and it would haul its assets without further palaver to the nearest underbrush. But we reckoned without due consideration of the complex nature of a dunghill fowl.

Unlike a gamecock, to whom an accepted challenge means a fight to the death, your dunghill lives by the maxim. "He who fights and runs away will live to fight another day." His weapons are bluff and bluster, a raucous voice and a finished strategy of retreat—all foreign to the gamecock which the ancient Greeks and Syrians considered an emblem of divinity. So, now, instead of meeting Ben face to face as the latter, sick and weak, staggered forth to do battle, this bastard of a mongrel beat a retreat, still strutting and cackling insolently and when Ben, exhausted from chasing it, paused for breath, it flapped its awkward wings and crowed.

Neither my brother, myself nor Ben had ever heard anything like that crow! In it were the ghosts of a thousand dunghill ancestors, each of which had died a hundred deaths while squawking in terror before the axe mercifully sent them to their only possible ultimate destination—the soup pot. In it was a wail of protest against spirit, a plea for property rights and a claim that bluster be listed first among the sterling virtues. It began staccato, rose crescendo and died in a gutteral, choking admission that its author was a victim of range paralysis and the roup—for which it was not re-

sponsible. It was a crow of terror—and a crow to strike terror to the stoutest heart.

My brother and I glanced at Ben to see how he would take it.

And Ben, Ben the Glorious, Ben whose ancestors had enjoyed the veneration of Washington, Jackson, Rhett and Breckinridge, Ben whose sons and grandsons were to write history in Maryland's cocking annals, Ben the First and the forefather of all the Bens, stopped in his tracks! Slowly, the hackles of the back of his head rose and slowly his tail drooped as he appeared to shrink and began to sing like a hen.

And now, for the enlightenment of the handful of readers who neither raise nor fight gamecocks, it might be well to dwell briefly upon a most interesting characteristic of the breed. Like a game horse, dog, man or any other of the lesser animals, a gamecock, gamest of them all, operates entirely upon spirit. When this is gone, it is completely gone. There is nothing left and his entire nature undergoes a transformation. His voice changes to a high pitched, effeminate song of sorrow, his feathers droop, his body shrivels as he becomes at once the most craven of creatures. Far more tragic than death is this spectacle of the spirit leaving the body of a normally unconquerable creature, while the physical organs continue to function.

To use a technical term, Ben the First was "hacked." Hacked by the ungodly crow of a dunghill fowl—superinduced by weeks of torturing illness. There was nothing we could do about it and, sad at heart, my brother and I left him to solve his own destiny.

A year later, we returned to the country and the first thing we did was call for Ben. We found him fully recovered in flesh and feather, but still dead in soul. At the approach of the Negro's dunghill rooster, Ben would shrink and the hackle feathers at the back of his head would slowly rise. And every time that ill begotten foul misfit would voice its ear-splitting, unearthly crow, Ben would flee in terror for the nearest cover. We paid Ben's board and gathered him sorrowfully to our arms, determined, if possible, to recapture the fugitive immortal spirit that was his.

In this we were quickly successful after returning him to his own kind, for within two days his clarion call was awakening us at 4 a. m. as in the days of old. Within a week, no living creature was safe around the barnyard as Ben developed a strange and vicious savagery foreign to his former aloof and chivalrous nature.

Dogs and cats, as well as all feathered animals were wise to give him a wide berth. A neighbor raised peacocks and we almost had a lawsuit on our hands when three trespassed upon Ben's walk —and never returned. Toward Thanksgiving, we bought a live turkey and Ben tore the whiskers off the sixteen-pound gobbler. Meanwhile, we bred him upon his daughters and granddaughters and there emerged another generation of Bens, perhaps the most famous of them all, not one of whom ever showed anything other than that ultimate degree of gameness demanded in the cockpit.

It was two years later that my brother had a thought, a bi-annual event with my brother.

"I wonder," said he, "if Black Joe still has that dunghill rooster?"

"I wonder," I replied, for it was as easy to read what was in his mind as the box score at a big league game. No dunghill fowl should ever go to Chicken Heaven boasting that it had hacked one of the finest gamecocks that ever lived!

We caught Ben at the expense of numerous scars on our hands and wrists where he dug his strong beak and spurs into us in protest. We held him while alternately he bit at us and crowed his defiance. Ben was now seven years old, weighed over seven pounds and as hard as a rock. We felt sorry for that dunghill rooster, but eased our consciences with the thought that it wouldn't last long. Just one shuffle and that scum of the chicken world would know its place. Ben simply had to wipe out that black mark on his otherwise spotless record.

At last, we arrived at Black Joe's estate. There was no one around, so we took Ben from his carrying case and dropped him near the chicken coop. He looked about his surroundings curiously for a moment, and then sounded his sharp call, the short, clear, melodious and unmistakable voice of a dead game fighter.

The dunghill rooster was nowhere in sight. But, suddenly, from a clump of bushes a hundred yards distant, there arose a long drawn wail of protest. It began staccato, rose crescendo and died in a gutteral, choking admission that its author was the victim of bumble feet, coccidiosis and worm infestation—for which it was not responsible.

"Let me be!" it proclaimed. "I never done you nothing! Go back to your damn fighting aristocrats! I know I can't lick you, but I am

a braver man than you are because I can crow while my heart is torn with fear."

And Ben heard and understood. Slowly, he appeared to shrink before our eyes as the hackles began to rise at the back of his head. And then Ben, Ben the Glorious, Ben the progenitor of a strain of fighting fowl famous in a dozen states for their desperate gameness, slunk off to hide beneath the crumbling steps of Black Joe's ramshackle home.

He had never forgotten the one thing which could strike terror to his noble heart—the eerie, quavering crow of a dunghill fowl whose highest possible destiny was the soup pot.

Rose into Cauliflower

by Mel Matison

My CHANCE was here. With a black eye and aching bones I sat in the dressing room of the Garden listening to Pat Farley, the boxing manager, make me a proposition. I had just won the amateur boxing finals in my division. Pat, with a cigar in his mouth and a flashing diamond in his tie, talked fast and plenty, saying a lot about making me famous and both of us a lot of money. I sighed through my split lip and thought, how strange is America. I, Alexander Volkine, coming to fame as a prize fighter in America, and only a few years back everything so different.

Then, my life was to be the ballet. In Russia I had studied at the Imperial Maryinsky, showing great promise. But with the Revolution that life ended and widowed Mama took me to America, to the East Side, New York. Here, no beautiful Russian garden and great farm, only pushcarts and smells and close houses together with no trees. And Mama taking in dresses to sew. Yet my dreams of the ballet I still kept in my heart.

But on the East Side I needed more than dreams of ballet. Hard knocks were plenty there, with so many rough boys always fighting. I soon learned to defend myself and when in school a boxing team was started I joined. Then three years ago, with school finished, I tried out for the amateurs, each year going further toward the finals. This year I won. Now here I was so far from my beloved ballet with Pat Farley puffing at his cigar and saying, "I'll make you tops in the middleweight division, kid. You're going places."

I sighed and signed a contract.

First, Pat changed my name to "Butch Volo." Next he taught me much about boxing I did not know before. Then he arranged my first professional fight.

For this fight I wore new purple tights which looked pretty but how I wished they were ballet tights.

When I got in the ring Pat gave me instructions, and it was all over fast, a quick K.O. I did not like the other fellow's face. Not like amateurs, this one was old and rough.

I fought many fights and won. Alexander Volkine was now

Butch Volo with a flatter nose and less four teeth. There was more money and we moved to a better flat. But Mama was not happy.

"Alexander," she said to me one night. "Have you forgotten the ballet? Do you not still have the wish to dance?"

"Yes, Mama. My love for ballet shall never die but what can I do? I am a fighter."

"You fight only once in a while so you have the time to study. There is a little money so you can pay for lessons."

"Matushka, you are wonderful! I did not think of it. I shall try it."

Promptly the next day I went to the best ballet school in the city, that of Ivan Pupinoff.

In Pupinoff's office, I shook with fear and with happiness. He was chubby and fat. He looked at me over his glasses.

"So you want to study ballet," he said with an accent. "What do you know of dancing?"

"I have studied at the Maryinsky in Russia," I said simply.

Pupinoff jumped. He smiled and clapped his hands. "Maryinsky! Russian trained, wonderful!"

He then gladly took my enrollment money and told me five days a week I was to study. Again I was Alexander Volkine, now a ballet dancer. And even if I was learning all over again the first five positions with "toe-heel, toe-heel, one-two, one-two," I was happy. Like in fighting I dreamed perhaps someday I should become a professional ballet dancer. America was a great country, I realized.

It was hard work at Pupinoff's studio. But it was harder because I had to train for fights, too. To Pat I said nothing about my ballet lessons, he not being sensitive for Art, preferring burlesque.

Then came my inspiration. Only a week was I at Pupinoff's when I met Anna, sweet Anna whose black hair and dark eyes did not let me sleep. I was unlacing my dancing slippers after a lesson when she spoke to me.

"Pupinoff tells me you are Russian. So am I. I am Anna Rakova."

I looked up and my heart fell. Here was dvorianstvo, nobility, or as we Americans say, "the ritz." She was beautiful. Her eyes were like Mama's, full of tears, almost if the world was getting the best of her. Och, to make those eyes laugh. We spoke in our native

tongue and then went to a little Russian tea room on Fifty-first Street.

We had blinis, kapusta, roast yagenok, tea and soft words. There was so much in common—both Russians, in love with ballet and dreaming some day to be in the Tomanoff American-Russian Ballet.

Of course I did not tell her of my fighting, that's so rough and lowbrow and different from ballet. I looked at her tenderly. And I think she looked back tenderly although my nose was getting flatter and my teeth were getting fewer. Right there I prayed in my heart to give up boxing quickly.

Everything progressed that year. I managed so Pat knew nothing of the ballet and Anna knew nothing of the fighting. At the studio Pupinoff told Anna and me that if we kept up the good work we would soon audition for Tomanoff. Meantime the fighting paid for the flat, the lessons and the good times with Anna. Dancing helped my fighting in the legs, and fighting helped my dancing for strength.

Then one spring day at the gym I was shadow boxing when Pat rushed in excited as never before.

"Butch, great news. Our big break," he shouted and grinned. "I lined up a fight with Charlie Bazarkis. He's a leading contender. If you lick him, we're heading for the top. And better than that—the gate! Our share of the dough is ten thousand bucks if we win."

"Pat, that's beautiful. When do we sign?"

"Today. The fight is set for July twenty-fifth. Six weeks to train."

This was terrific. With this money I could stop the hateful fighting. Mama could give up sewing and I would study ballet untroubled and marry Anna—if she would have me. I thought I would even miss a few dancing lessons to train for the fight.

All the next week I trained hard at the gym. Only twice did I go to the studio, explaining to Pupinoff business was keeping me away. But when that Saturday I took time from the gym to go to the studio to see Anna, I found not her but Pupinoff who greeted me wildly.

"My boy. It is arranged. It is set. I spoke to Tomanoff. You and Anna will work as never before to audition for him July twentieth."

Such excitement all over again and more so. One grand thing after another—but wait. Confusion. How can I rehearse for the audition and train for the fight at the same time? Impossible to do both. I must sacrifice. It is not hard to decide. I shall not train for the fight but will work at the studio, have the audition and then take a chance for the ten thousand dollar fight without training. But what of Pat?

That night comes an idea. I write to Pat. I write cleverly that family business takes me out of town but not to worry for I will be back in time to win the fight.

I tell Mama what happens, and to say nothing. Next I take a room near Pupinoff's studio so as not to be found by Pat. This is not too pleasant for I will be away from home for so long. But it is so, when a man gets older he gets far from his mother.

Lastly that evening Anna and I celebrate and I dare speak of love. We are in the Russian tea room on Fifty-first Street. She wears a black and red dress and looks perfect. I gasp like from a left jab.

"I am so happy," she says. "You and I, Alex, we shall succeed."

"Always when you are near I succeed, Dusha," I say. Dusha is a Russian word of love, like Americans say "toots."

"Wait until after the audition," she says. But I know from the way her dark eyes flash that everything, the world is mine. Never has a man been so lucky. Anna is the only person in the world to knock me out.

But love took a rear seat for a month. Pupinoff decided Anna and I would give for Tomanoff *The Spirit of the Rose.* In this ballet a girl returns home from a dance and falls asleep. On her shoulder is a rose. The spirit of that rose comes to her room. I as the rose leap all around the stage, leap into her heart, dance with her and fly away. I wear a pretty red skin-tight costume with petals, and it is such a beautiful dance, so delicate, so tender.

We rehearsed morning, night and day, loving every minute of it. I spoke to Mama on the telephone many times telling her to hold to the story to Pat I am out of town on business, not to worry.

But only when I spoke to Mama did I think of that side of my life. Otherwise it was all *The Spirit of the Rose.* Finally came the night before the audition and Pupinoff was satisfied.

"Tomorrow I shall proudly lose two dancers to Tomanoff," he said.

The next day my Anna was not frightened but I was. Butch Volo, a hero of the prize ring, conqueror of middleweights, shivered as we entered the studio to face Tomanoff himself, Maître de Ballet Rosakov and the ballerina Volovna.

"Be not afraid, Alex," Anna whispered to me. "Succeed now and always our lives shall be together."

Enough. Those words sent me to Paradise. I danced. I pirouetted, I jeted, I fouetted like a Nijinsky. My elevation was as never before. I danced with love not only in my heart for Anna but in my whole body for the ballet. How I danced. How my Anna was a perfect partner, a feather in my arms, a Pavlova. Her adagio was charming, alluring. She looked at me with eyes of love. I stood high on my points, in rhythm with the right poise I had studied so hard, and with expression.

It is over. With a whirling tour en l'air I give my beloved back to sleep and leap from the room. She awakens to find me, her rose spirit gone. So was the ballet finale.

I rushed to the wings. Anna followed. We embraced. Ah, I could have remained that way forever but Pupinoff called.

"Come here. Come out, my doves."

We descended to Tomanoff, Rosakov and Volovna who smiled.

"Bravo," she said in Russian, which means hooray.

"Thank you baruishna," I said bowing and kissing her hand.

Tomanoff was quiet, cold. Anna and I looked at each other, at him, and waited. Then he spoke calmly without excitement.

"In a few years, with hard work and study, you two may develop into good, maybe great dancers."

Anna and I looked at each other. Did we fail? Were we rejected?

Then Tomanoff spoke magic words: "I shall take you into my company for the fall season."

Gone was our dignity—Anna and I kissed right before them.

Pupinoff that night gave to Anna and me a charming celebration with much champagne which I drank thinking how angry Pat would be if he knew. Then it struck me in the morning I would see Pat and in five days fight Charlie Bazarkis.

With a fairly big head and nervously I went to Pat at the gym the next day. He was a wreck, like with a nervous breakdown.

"Butch, Butch," he yelled and grabbed me. "Where've you been? I've been going nuts. Your mother stopped me from going

to the cops. How's your condition? The fight's four days off. Where've you been?"

"Please do not worry, Pat. I am in shape," I lied. "It was urgent for me to go away. After the fight I will tell you why. Now let us go to work for Charlie Bazarkis. The ten thousand dollars sounds good."

"Thank God you're here in one piece, anyway. I've got three days to get you in shape. Oh Gawd!"

Pat was so nervous and jumpy, to tell him then I was fighting my last fight, I could not do. I would tell him everything after the fight.

So I trained. Pat rushed me from bicycle riding to shadow boxing to workouts with pugs. It was not like training for the ballet: there I enjoyed rehearsals, thinking of Anna and my love for being a star dancer. Here I thought only of ten thousand dollars. Which, too, was nice to think of.

Even the day before the fight Pat made me work out. Then some newspaper reporters came to the gym to watch me box. They took my pictures, and how I was frightened when I saw Butch Volo's fighting face in the papers that evening. Anna might recognize me as a prize fighter and there would be ruination.

But Anna greeted me fondly when I called at her house so I figured she does not read the sporting pages. So we sat on the sofa, talking a little, sighing and looking into each other's eyes.

Then wickedness came into my life. Anna's brother Boris came into the parlor.

Boris is seventeen and getting 100 per cent American, chewing gum and not wearing a hat or garters. "Look," he says, and holds up two tickets. "For the Bazarkis-Volo fight tomorrow night. My boss gave them to me."

Over turns my stomach. I feel as though I am hit on the jaw. If I am not sitting I would fall. But Boris and Anna do not notice me. Anna especially looks at Boris and claps together her hands.

"Oh, I would love to go," she cries. "I have never seen a boxing match. Please take me, Boris. It should be interesting to see this American sport, so savage, so exciting and so, so American."

Quickly I speak up. "Too savage, Anna. Don't go. It is not for you, blood and punching. You are too sweet and tender for that."

"I am not too tender, Alex," she says. "You make of me a doll. I shall go."

By all the saints of Russia, why does that brat Boris have to have a boss who has tickets to my fight? I can say nothing to stop her going. Her mind is made up.

I went home and tried to figure something to do. Suddenly it came to me! I would not fight! Then Anna will not see me as a fighter. I went to sleep dreaming of fighting Boris with Bazarkis the referee.

In the morning I rush to Pat's house. He stands over his breakfast table where is no food but many newspapers. His face is red.

"Pat," I say, "I am sorry. I cannot fight. You see—"

He interrupts me wildly. "You're telling me you can't fight. So that's where you were, you pansy. I get you your big chance and you run out on me. I'm the laughing stock of Broadway."

I do not understand him. I look at the papers on the table and nearly faint. I am ruined. Nothing is left for me. The reporters are too smart.

There on the front pages are pictures of me—Pupinoff's favorite picture of me as the Spirit of the Rose in my petals costume. Another picture is of me with my fighting face in fighting tights.

My eyes are bleary as I read the newspapers:

"Fighting Toe Dancer Scraps Tonight." "Fighting Rosebud Battles." "Fragrant Pug Fights." "Rose Turns Cauliflower."

"Butch Volo, contender for the middleweight boxing championship, who fights Charlie Bazarkis at the Garden tonight, was revealed today as a dancer with the Tomanoff Ballet Company."

I can read no more. Tears come from my eyes. Toppling went Anna, ballet, Tomanoff, Pupinoff.

"That's what I get for managing a mad Russian," says Pat. "Why didn't you tell me you were a toe dancer? Pat Farley, manager of a toe dancer. If it was the Big Apple but toe dancing—Gawd." He looked at me as if to kill.

Anger struck me. I might as well fight. "I shall knock Charlie Bazarkis all over the place and win ten thousand dollars," I said to Pat. "I shall take out on him my sorrow and yours."

Pat is not impressed by these remarks. "You better take a dive and save your face for the ballet," he says sour as kvas.

"Ballet?" I say. "They won't have me now. My Anna, everything is gone because of the fight. I'm going home to rest."

Pat waved an unfriendly goodbye. I went home saying nothing

to Mama who knew nothing of this mess as she does not read the American press.

At night I go to my dressing room at the Garden. Pat is there with his anger the same. All my life it has been so, misunderstood. Pat sits without a word. I undress. The warning bell sounds and we get up silently.

When I come to the ring Charlie is already in his corner.

"Where are the pink tights, Rosey?" shouts a fan.

"Got your dancing slippers, Dear?" calls another.

There were many boohs and laughs. Och, my great misery.

Meanwhile Charlie smirks in his corner. Now he stands up and bows low. "Welcome, Fairy Prince," he says. And then makes a nasty sound with his tongue.

The last straw is added. I am white with anger. I feel ugly, to kill Bazarkis with one punch.

The referee calls us out for final instructions. Charlie grins. Even the referee looks at me peculiar. And Charlie, big and tough, looks at me with laughing Greek eyes.

The bell. We shake mitts and Charlie again bows sweet and low. The fight is on as the crowd yells:

"Kiss him, Sweetheart" . . . "Be careful of those dancing legs, Rosey." And other awful things.

Charlie right away shows no respect for me. Without feeling me out he sails in and—clomp!—biffs me on the jaw. I go down.

But I don't stay long on the floor. When I come up I am dizzy but still feel ugly. I don't know what I am doing. I feel I am back at dear Pupinoff's with Anna dancing the Spirit of the Rose. I shake my head to clear up for I am sure this is no ballet. Biff, clomp, down again I go.

This time I stay until nine. I get up, go down, the whole round is monotony and the crowd laughs and jeers.

As I drag back to my corner, Pat says nothing but he works on me. With all kinds of smells, rubs and drinks he brings me back to my senses. It hurts my nature to fight but it hurts more to get socked by Charlie's left hand.

Charlie hops out for the second round and I see in his eye the look to finish me. I cover up, clinch and hold. The crowd hollers and the referee breaks us.

My arms are like lead but my legs are holding me up. Thanks to dancing ballet they are strong.

So I dance.

The crowd roars. Charlie looks at me as if I am crazy. But still I dance. Not really, but lightly I trip around the ring dodging Charlie and whirling like a Pupinoff leg exercise. Since only my legs work I use them. Charlie chases. I hit him lightly, for to get back my strength I must do everything lightly, gracefully.

Soon the crowd and Charlie realize what I am doing. Every fighter dances in the ring. He is on his toes and hops around to worry the other feller. Footwork, we call it, or weaving.

So I weave, only more like the dancer I truly am. I use the entrechat which is a leap with feet changing positions. I stick in a few battements which is a difficult sliding around with the feet. First I am in back of Charlie, then in front of him for a second. As he reaches for me I whirl away again. I get faster, lighter.

Next I hit Charlie with a left jab and keep my arm straight out in a line, dancing in that direction. In ballet this is an arabesque. Charlie gets dizzy chasing me when the bell rings.

"A dancer even in the ring," Pat says. "I never knew it was in you. Keep it up," he tells me. "It's a good show and might hold you together a coupla rounds."

For the third round I keep dancing. Charlie is mad and trying to put me away. But in this way he leaves himself wide open and I put in a few good biffs.

For a second he worries me. He makes a pig push at me to stop my whirling around him and he pushes me to the ropes. Slam, he hits me right in the middle and I go "ummph." He slams me again, this time on the nose and my back goes to the ropes. But I bounce back and come to the center of the ring in a pas devourree, quick, tiny steps.

"Come on, you Russian," Charlie says. "Fight."

But I stay cool and dance. Slowly my strength comes back.

In the fourth and fifth rounds I keep dancing. My strength is back, the crowd likes it which makes me think to this day people love dancing more than fighting, and best of all Charlie gets dizzier and madder. But he can do nothing. What does he know of fighting a ballet dancer?

In the sixth round I see my chance. Charlie has tried everything, even pleading to the referee to stop me dancing which the referee does not do as it is a style and I really fight between the dancing.

Charlie is looking around for me, very mixed up. He finds me and tries to push me again. I see he is disgusted and unhappy. I feint a dance step and stop. Suddenly I let go a terrific whack to his face. His jaw takes up most of his face so my fist lands there. Charlie goes down, never to stand up again that night.

In the dressing room, Pat was so happy he jumped all over ripping things apart at great expense. He would stop jumping, look at me and scratch his head. "It's crazy," he said. "Goofy, but the greatest thing in the world."

I of course was not too glad. To knock out Charlie meant to me a finger snap. But my Anna, my ballet, gone forever.

Then an attendant came in and said a Miss Rakova to see me.

Why was I not spared this torture? How could I face her? Why did she have to come in person to scold me for my sins? But bravely I told the usher to show her in.

Anna comes in and her face is beaming. Her eyes are for me. What can this be—delirium? She rushes to my black eye. It hurts, but wonderfully when she kisses it.

"My Alex," she says. "I am so proud. This fighting is so masculine, so heroic. I am angry you did not tell me before you are an American pugilist."

I am dazzled.

Since that night it is two years. Anna and I have twins. My nose is two inches wider and I have a cauliflower ear. Anna helps Pat manage me and I hope soon to be champ. Anna even calls me Butch.

But my beloved ballet is dead. Anna calls it a sissy's game. When I am not training she takes me to baseball games.

But happiness comes when I sneak out of the house some evening and go to see the ballet.

Joe, The Great McWhiff

by Kimball McIlroy

"I GOT a great pitcher for you, Tom," Shorty Cohn said, breaking into my office at the ball park. "Greatest pitcher I ever saw. Come look him over and we'll sign him up."

In these times you're interested in a player just so he's got two arms and a low classification, so I asked, "Where's he at?"

"The zoo," Shorty said. "He lives there. Quit asking questions and get started. First thing you know the Yanks will have him signed."

"O.K.," I said, "if he can throw, just throw." Shorty called a cab to take us to the zoo and when we got there he dragged me to the monkey house. Nobody was there but monkeys, millions of them, making a racket. Shorty didn't say a word. He took me over to a cage marked GORILLA. Inside the cage was the biggest monkey I ever saw.

"That's him," Shorty said.

I said, "I ought to fire you right now."

Shorty said, "You just watch."

There was a pile of coconuts on the floor of the monkey's cage. Shorty got a banana and poked it through the bars. When the monkey saw the banana he picked up a coconut and let fly.

I blinked. That coconut traveled so fast I hadn't even seen it.

"He don't like bananas," Shorty explained, working the trick a couple of times more so I could watch.

"Come on, Shorty," I said. "I got work to do."

"You mean you ain't going to sign him up? Did you ever see an arm like that?"

"He's got a real arm," I admitted, watching the monkey. Those coconuts went like rifle bullets and they never missed.

"How many guys would hit one of those coconuts?" says Shorty. "Sign him up. He's even O.K. in the draft. You can pitch him against the Sox tomorrow."

"What would the rules say about him?" I asked, beginning to waver.

Shorty sneered. "Is there anything in the rules says you can't have an ape pitching for you?"

It wasn't until we were in the cab with the monkey sitting between us that I realized what I had done.

"We bought him," Shorty said. "First we got to sign him to a contract. We'll witness it very legal as his guardians. Then we got to get him a uniform. Then we got to give him a name. For the program." Shorty scratched his head. "We'll give him a good business name—Joe McWhiff."

Well, the monkey was ours now, and he *could* pitch.

The minute we started to explain things to the rest of the team the big problem was who was going to room with him, but Shorty stopped the argument by pointing out that it didn't matter because we had a two-week home stand first.

Shorty had it all figured out that we'd stake Joe down on the mound and give Al Bates, our catcher, a banana. There was nothing in the rules against staking a pitcher down. Al would hold the banana where he wanted Joe to throw the ball.

I agreed to pitch Joe against the Sox the next afternoon. We had some trouble getting Joe into his uniform for the game. When Shorty led him out the Sox raised a loud squawk. "It ain't legal," they said. "There ain't nothing in our contract says we got to play against an ape."

"Is there anything in your contract says you *don't* have to?" Shorty asked.

That stopped them. They finally agreed to play the game, but under protest.

Shorty staked Joe down near the rubber and Al went to the plate. The umpire called, sort of doubtfully, "Play ball!" Al took a banana out of his pocket and held it where he wanted the pitch. Joe wound up and let go. Al yanked the banana away and stuck out his mitt.

Nobody saw the ball but everybody heard it land in the mitt. The umpire yelled, "Strike one!" The batter looked dazed. He kept right on looking dazed while Joe burned two more right through the center of the plate.

Joe had a wind-up that would have baffled Houdini. Sometimes he let the ball go from one place and sometimes from another. It didn't matter much where he let it go from because the batters couldn't see it anyway.

When the inning was over Shorty turned to me.

"What do you think of him, Tom?" he asked. "Did I get you a pitcher or didn't I?"

The Sox got only three hits off him, all three by just holding their bats straight out in front of them and then by letting the ball bounce straight into center field.

Shorty had it all figured out how he'd get around Joe batting. He'd decided Joe'd never be a hitter anyway and that the thing to do was to have him put out as soon as possible. It worked all right the first time. The Sox pitcher was evidently planning to get rid of Joe with a beanball. Only Joe caught it and tossed it back at him.

Naturally, the umpire said, "You're out!"

After that the Sox got smart, and when Joe came to bat next they purposely walked him. But all Shorty did was lead Joe off the base-line and make him automatically out that way.

The first time they called a balk on Joe was in the third inning. He was waiting on the mound and all of a sudden he seemed to go into his wind-up.

"That was a balk!" the Sox manager shouted.

Shorty was out of the dugout like a rabbit. "That was no balk," he yelled. "He's scratching."

There was quite an argument about it until the umpire said to Shorty, "You show me the difference between that and his wind-up, and I'll reverse my decision."

Shorty tried, but he couldn't convince them. When he came back to the dugout he said, "We'll have to get him some flea powder."

Aside from his balks and the three hits Joe was never in any trouble and we won the game going away. When it was over the Sox manager came around to see us. He was mad—fighting mad.

"We're going to protest to the president of the League," he said. "Maybe there's nothing in the rules says you can't pitch a monkey but you can't tell me it's according to the spirit of the game."

"You got beat by a better man," Shorty said. "You should take your beating and quit squawking."

After he'd gone Shorty said to me, "We signed Joe up legal. There's nothing wrong with his contract. Pitching that game didn't tire Joe a bit. Why don't we pitch him in every game from here on? He could win them all for us."

So we pitched him the next day and he won that game, too. On the Sunday he won a double-header. We were turning the fans away by the gross at the box office, so many of them wanted to see Joe. After the Sunday games the Sox manager dropped around again.

"We heard from the front office," he said. "They won't make a decision until they send somebody to look this monkey over for himself. You'll see, though. They'll make you replay all them games."

Shorty laughed at him. The Monday papers from all over the country were full of stories about Joe, and it didn't look like we could miss. We were starting a series with the Yanks. The top baseball writers from all the big papers were there to watch Joe do his stuff.

Someone told us that Joe McCarthy, the Yanks' pilot, had been talking to the Sox manager, but that didn't worry Shorty.

"If you can't see 'em, you can't hit 'em," he pointed out.

Rizzuto was the first man up. He held his bat out and singled into left. Rolfe followed him and singled into right the same way. I looked at Shorty. Selkirk singled into center, scoring Rizzuto.

Joe didn't seem to have lost any of his speed and Al was calling for the ball in the right places. DiMaggio swung his bat a little and hit a double, scoring Rolfe and Selkirk. Someone yelled, "Take him out!" It was the first time they'd ever done that with Joe.

I watched closely when Keller came to bat and finally I saw what was happening. Knowing that Joe could hit the banana every time, the New York batters were sneaking a look at it and holding their bats where the ball was going to come.

In the third inning we had to take Joe out. Shorty was broken-hearted. "What'll we do?" he asked me.

It didn't help any when the Boss, who'd been doing nothing but patting us on the back during Joe's winning streak, came around and said: "You guys should know better than to try and make a pitcher out of a monkey and a monkey out of me. One more trick like that and I'll fire the both of you."

We tried Joe on Tuesday and Wednesday and both times the Yanks knocked him out of the box within the space of three innings. The papers were beginning to make sarcastic cracks about "the great McWhiff" and about the two wise guys who thought they had the baseball racket beat, meaning Shorty and me.

"Even Joe's worrying," Shorty told me on Wednesday night.

"He's starting to brood. He just sits and stares at them there Yank pitchers."

Then, to make matters worse if possible, who should show up there before the game on Thursday but Mr. Herbert Gilbert Norbert from the League front office. He was the secretary in charge of Public Decorum and Good Order. He called Shorty and me before him as if we had been schoolboys. "I am here to observe this monkey," he said. "Complaint has been made and I must be satisfied that he is qualified in personality to support the dignity of the game."

"Now look, Mr. Secretary," Shorty said right away, "Joe's all right. He's a gentleman both on the field and off."

Mr. Norbert acted very doubtful. "I hear the monkey hasn't been doing so well recently. Lost his last three starts. Now if he's no good I'm sure you won't mind releasing him if I ask you to."

"He'll get back into form," Shorty said. "He's just having a bad week."

"Now, I want to be fair," Mr. Norbert said. "Suppose you put him in there today. If he looks good, you can keep him. If he doesn't, you release him. That's fair, isn't it?"

It was fair enough, but that didn't help. The Yanks had Joe all figured out. We hadn't been planning to pitch him. He didn't look so hot against the Yanks.

Shorty worked over him like a mother before the game. When Shorty came in, after staking Joe down, he said, "It's a funny thing but Joe don't seem to be brooding any more. I think he figures he can take this game."

Rizzuto walked out to the plate full of confidence. Al took out the banana and Joe let fly with the ball. Rizzuto held out his bat.

The ball went *smack* into Al's mitt and the umpire yelled, "Strike one!"

Rizzuto looked at his bat and then got ready for the next pitch. It went *smack* into Al's mitt, too. So did the third one.

I couldn't understand it, and I didn't understand it any better when the same thing happened to Rolfe and Selkirk. Joe retired the side on nine straight pitches.

But when Al Bates came into the dugout the sweat was rolling down his face and he shook.

"Tom," he said in a voice that came up from his heels, "now he's throwing curves."

And Joe was. I guess he'd been watching the way the Yankee pitchers flicked their wrists when they tossed curve balls.

"What a brain!" Shorty said proudly. "He's got everything, even brains."

Joe pitched a no-hitter and the fans went crazy. Shorty was jumping up and down like a little boy. After the game Mr. Norbert came down to the dugout.

"Your monkey pitched a good game," he said. "A fine game. And I'll stick to my bargain. But first I'd like to meet him. You don't see many monkeys playing baseball. It's out of the ordinary."

That's a matter of opinion, but all Shorty said was, "Sure, Mr. Norbert. Joe'd like to meet you too. Come on out to the mound."

A good half of the customers had stayed in the stands to look at Joe who still was chained at the pitcher's box. Norbert swelled his chest and shot his cuffs as he walked out before the public.

My mind was going around in circles with thoughts of winning the pennant by thirty games and taking the World Series in four straight no hitters.

"Joe's a fine fellow, Mr. Norbert," Shorty said as we came up to the mound. "He's the best behaved pitcher I ever met. Shake hands with Mr. Norbert, Joe."

Joe and Norbert shook hands. All the stands gave a cheer and Mr. Norbert took off his hat and bowed to them. Shorty unchained Joe, and we walked toward the plate together. One of the umpires was taking spare balls from the underground box.

"I can't see any reason why he shouldn't pitch for you," Norbert was saying. "He seems very decent and dependable."

Shorty beamed. "Joe's no trouble at all."

Norbert reached into his pocket while he was talking and pulled out a banana. "Here's a little present for Joe," he said, holding it out.

Before Shorty or I could move Joe had snatched a ball from the umpire and let fly. Norbert dodged and started to run. Joe jerked his chain out of Shorty's hand, helped himself to an armful of the balls and ran after Norbert.

"Drop the banana, Mr. Norbert," I yelled.

He didn't hear me. He was heading out toward center field and behind him came Joe, firing a baseball every few steps. They all hit Norbert straight as an arrow just below the hip pockets and at every shot Norbert gave a yell and a leap and the crowd gave

a cheer. Norbert disappeared through the center field gates just as Joe's last baseball landed on him.

"Well," Shorty said, "we've lost our pitcher."

"His career is ended." Shorty was almost crying. "Norbert will have to stand up to write the report on him, but Joe is through." Then Shorty gave a howl. "Where did Norbert get that banana?"

The umpire had an idea. "I wouldn't want to say for sure," he said, "but Joe McCarthy looked like he was holding a banana behind him after the game."

"And I wasn't watching him." This was the last straw that broke Shorty's heart. "That's what happens when you don't watch everybody. What's baseball coming to if there's guys in it who would do a thing like that?"

Return of a Trouble Maker

by James Kieran

When they barred the spitter everybody said Phil was through, but he was a foxy devil and he worked up a new curve and a change of pace and he kept hanging on year after year.

But when we made the first western trip that year you could see he was all washed up and in Cincinnati, George O'Leary called Phil in and told him to pack his bag for Kansas City. He was a ten-year man and didn't have to go unless he wanted to, but I guess he had to have a job.

Going through the lobby he waved to Frank Johnson and me. "I'll be back," he said.

"How come?" Frank Johnson said.

"Cause I've got a wife and four kids and you can't send girls to college on no minor league salary."

"Good luck, Phil," I said.

"I don't want no good wishes from you young punks," Phil said. He glared at me. "And if you don't like it you can go to hell."

"O.K., Phil, take it easy," Frank Johnson said.

"O.K.," Phil said as he left.

That was the trouble with Phil. He could have been a coach because he knew the game inside out and he'd been in the league a long while and had every hitter pegged. But he couldn't get along with anybody. He always wanted to start a fight.

We were sorry to see him go though, and even missed the fights he used to start. We got going good that year and by the Fourth we were up there one, two, three. It was a hot summer but we played in luck and when we hit Labor Day we were still in there.

We finished up the last western trip half a game in front and on the train back that night, I saw a little dispatch in the paper from Kansas City about Phil being unconditionally released. "The action followed rumors of a recent club house row," the story read.

"The same old army game," Frank said.

All we were thinking about was that final home stand and that half game edge we had.

And then Bill Jolson slipped, trying to field a bunt when the grass was wet. Bill had won twenty-two games for us and the

sports writers were saying he would pitch us right into the Series. When he slipped, he fractured his ankle and that seemed to fracture our pennant chances too.

We broke even with the Braves in a double header the next day and when we got back to the club house who was standing there but Phil. We were feeling pretty good and we all said hello but Phil just stared at us.

I was walking past George O'Leary's cubbyhole when I saw Phil saying to George that George needed a tough experienced pitcher for the home stretch, and O'Leary sighed and he said:

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Phil. You and me seem to be able to get along even if nobody else could do it with you. I'm not kidding you, my job depends on coming through this year. I'll take you on and if you can really help us come through before the end of the season, I'll have a good chance of getting you on as coach."

I heard Phil growling and I wondered why he should kick about a proposition like that. But he took it because he was in uniform the next day.

"Well, you had to call on the Old Timer," he said. "I told you I'd be back."

His voice was jeering and sharp and a few of the boys stopped dressing to look at him hard. They let it drop. We had plenty of worrying to do about hanging on ourselves and somehow we did, even with Phil complaining all the time because George didn't have to put him in, not even once. When the Cards came east for the final series it was us or the Bucs. If we won the last two games from the Cards we'd finish a couple of percentage points in front.

We pulled through in the first game two to one and Ed Corwin went all the way for us. Phil kept grousing about getting a chance.

The next afternoon, we stood to win or lose the flag. George told Phil to get out to the bull pen as usual and Phil began to grouse about what was the use of throwing them in that hot sun in the bull pen and stuff like that.

We did all right. Frank Johnson hit one into the right field boxes in the fourth and that put us three runs ahead. But the Cards picked up a couple in the sixth and in the seventh they would have gone ahead because Jack Marshbanks passed two men and it was only a running catch near the wall by Charley that kept us out of the soup.

In the eighth Marshbanks gave another pass. A single and an-

other pass filled the bases. George waved Marshbanks out, and in from left field comes old Phil.

George O'Leary came over from the bench and said: "Well, here's what you been asking for. Now let's see it." Phil only looked at him.

We had two out, but Al Breslow, the Cards' first baseman, could powder that old apple. A hit would mean the ball game for the Cards. Phil took his time warming up. He slipped one in, lost his man and finally got it up to two and two. Breslow fouled a couple off and Phil was standing on the hill watching Breslow, when suddenly he walked back toward second base. He started over toward me.

"Why the hell don't you get in position?" he shouted.

I didn't know what he was talking about. He kept on coming toward me still shouting and waving his arms. Nick trotted across from short-stop.

"You can't do that to me!" Phil kept shouting.

It didn't make any sense. Two umpires came over and then Phil gave me a stiff push and I nearly knocked the umpires over. Nobody knew what it was all about.

The fight stopped as quick as it began and Phil went back on the mound. He wound up and sent as sharp a breaking curve as you would want to see right past Breslow and Breslow swung hard and missed. He left the bases loaded when he missed that third one.

The crowd went wild. We pushed another run over and the next inning held them tight and when the crowd poured out of the stands we were in.

Half a dozen of us made for Dinty's that night. As I was coming in I ran into Phil.

"You sure did it," I said. "But let me in on something. What were you doing when you tried to start a fight in the eighth?"

"Hell, boy," he said. "I'm supposed to be a trouble maker, ain't I? And the umpires watch pretty close, don't they?"

"Yeah," I said. "So what?"

"Well," Phil said, "the spitter's barred so I just started a row and everybody gets excited and the umpires are watching something else and I put the old spit on her and I breeze that curve past Breslow."

I guess the girls will get through college all right and I guess Phil will be a mighty valuable man to have around as coach next year because you can't beat an old trouble maker like that.

The Denton Mare

by Edwin Lanham

THE MULE-EARED rabbit cleared a clump of cactus in a long, stiff jump and shot off at an angle. Clay almost lost his seat as the black filly wheeled to follow. The rabbit dived into the mesquite and Clay pulled the filly in. He laughed and said aloud, "Honey, you could beat the Denton mare."

Tom Drew rode alongside the filly. "Son, how many times have I told you not to run your horse after jackrabbits? You want to break her wind?"

"This little filly just likes to run, Pop." The horse held her small head high, and Clay stroked her foam frothed neck. "Pop, she's part antelope. I bet you she could beat the Denton mare."

Tom Drew shook his head. "No horse ever beat that Sam Bass mare. I seen her run last year."

"I wish I could see her."

"I heard Sam Bass say yesterday that he'd sold her."

"You saw Sam Bass?" Clay asked excitedly. "You mean he's here in town?"

"He was yesterday."

"I'd sure like to see him. Gee, why did he ever sell the Denton mare? Why, she's the fastest horse in North Texas—except Honey!"

Tom chuckled. "Son," he said. "How'd you like to run your little filly in a scrub race?"

"Gee, Pop! You mean it?"

"Kinkead thinks a lot of his long-legged bay, and he wants to make a match. There'll be some races Saturday."

"Give us a chance at him, Pop. Oh, let Honey race him!" The filly caught his excitement and spun on her heels.

"You got to have a stake, Clay."

Clay took quick inventory. All he had to call his own were his star-topped boots and his saddle. He said, "I'll put up my saddle."

"All right. I'll allow you twenty dollars on it. I'll put up the cash for you. But remember, if you lose you're bareback."

When Saturday came Clay had the filly ready under a post-oak

tree long before the race. He saw J. P. Kinkead, the storekeeper, holding the big bay near the start of the quarter-mile straightaway.

Clay had to admire the bay, beside which his filly seemed immature and delicate, as Tom Drew led her to the start. Jeff Rogers, the starter, waited, gun in hand. Clay stroked the filly's neck. She was trembling, waiting for his shout. Clay watched Rogers and saw his left eyelid twitch just before he pulled the trigger.

Clay leaned forward and felt the drive of the filly beneath him as he shouted, "Come on, you Honey!" The line of horses beside the track was a blur that quickly came to focus at the finish line ahead. The filly's hoofs drummed over the line and he was out on the prairie, in the open, and the big bay was three lengths behind.

Tom Drew waited for him under the post-oak tree. Clay laughed and cried, "It was easy. Pop, I told you she was fast enough to beat the Denton mare."

Tom smiled and went to get his horse. Clay slid to the ground. He rubbed Honey's broad forehead and put one arm around her neck. He was embarrassed when a low voice said in his ear, "Nice little filly you got there, bub."

A slim young man came into the shade and walked around the filly. He felt her knees, appraised her chest and hocks. "What do you want for her?"

"She ain't for sale," Clay said.

The man's dark eyes had a teasing expression. "Don't blame you. What do they call you, boy?"

Clay sized him up through narrowed lids as he fondled the filly's tapering muzzle. He said, "Clay Drew."

"I'm Sam Bass."

Clay stared. "Sam Bass!" He went around the filly to get near the slim young man. "Say, Mr. Bass, did you see my filly run? How would she make out against the Denton mare?"

"She'd give her a race. You got a quarter horse here, boy."

Clay grinned and called to his father as he came up, leading his dun horse. "Pop, this here is Sam Bass."

"I know Sam," Tom Drew said.

"He says Honey is as good as the Denton mare."

"Get on your filly, Clay, we got to go."

As they rode home Tom said, "He's got a great love of horses, Sam Bass, but he ain't in a class with his mare. They say down Denton way he poisoned a horse trough once to win a race."

Clay chased no more jackrabbits on the filly. He staked out a quarter mile on a level stretch of prairie and began to train her. Several times Sam Bass rode out from town to watch and one day Tom Drew drove past in a wagon while Sam was there.

"I came out to help the boy train," Sam Bass explained. "He's a right smart rider."

Tom looked at Sam. "This is a cattle ranch, not a racing stable. There'll be no more races."

Sam Bass smiled. "That filly is a race horse, and it would be too bad not to run her. Say, I run onto a feller in town this morning wants to make a match. Says his horse can outrun anything in Texas."

"I bet he can't outrun Honey," Clay said.

"That's enough, Clay." Tom Drew frowned. "I'm on my way to town and I won't be back to supper."

Tom Drew did not return until late. Clay sat up in bed and called, "I'm awake, Pop."

Tom opened the door. The lamp in his hand outlined the rueful smile on his face. "Son, I set you a damn bad example," he said.

"What, Pop?"

"There was a feller in town talking mighty big. Feller from San Antone named Joel Collins. Talked about a horse of his and Sam Bass put in about your filly and first thing I knew we'd made a match for a week from Saturday and a mighty big bet. Thousand dollars to be paid at the bank at the end of the race."

"Yippee!" Clay sat up in bed. "Pop, we'll win it. Honey will sure win that race."

"She's got to win it, Son," Tom Drew said.

When the race day came Clay knew that Honey was ready. The tremendous driving leap of her start, so important in a quarter mile race, was drilled to perfection. When he took her to the track he kept her under the trees by the creek and sat on a stump watching the crowd.

Tom Drew came to him a few minutes before the race, his eyes hard. "Clay, that's the horse you're going to race, that sorrel mare."

She was small, quick-moving, and a white hind foot caught Clay's eye. A short man in a dusty black hat held her halter.

"You got a big bite to chew," Tom said. "I've seen that sorrel run. That's the Denton mare."

Clay stared, and his throat tightened. "You sure, Pop?"

"See that nigh hind foot. That's the Denton mare, all right."

"Pop, I'll ask Sam Bass."

"He's on his horse down at the finish line." Tom slumped down on the stump, shaking his head. "Sam Bass tricked me into this match, Clay. It was him took me around to see Joel Collins. Him and Joel are partners."

"Pop, we can beat her," Clay said. "Honey is better than ever, and you ought to see how fast she gets away."

Tom looked up quickly. "Son, you give me an idea. You can ride like an Indian. Rip that saddle off the filly."

"Ride her bareback?"

"Yes. That Denton mare was always slow starting. Over at Denton, Sam had a mound of dirt couple feet high to help her get away, and a colored boy who rode her bareback."

Tom Drew took the saddle from the filly, helped Clay to her bare back and led the horse to the starting line. Joel Collins was a small man but he outweighed Clay by fifty pounds and the mare had a saddle to carry as well.

"Hey," Collins said. "Nothing was said about riding bareback."

"Nothing's going to be said about it now," Tom Drew said in a steely tone. "You can slip off your saddle if you want."

"How about it, Jeff?" Collins said.

The starter shrugged and gave Collins a hostile glance. "The kid can ride naked if he wants."

Collins hesitated, then grinned. "Hell, this mare can't be beat. I'll keep my saddle."

Clay knew a trick himself he had said nothing of, even to his father. In the other race he had noticed Jeff closed one eye *before* he pulled the trigger.

Clay's knees pressed the filly's sides. He could feel the gathering of her muscles for the start and he watched Jeff's left eye. He saw the slight twitch of the eyelid.

"Come on, Honey!" he yelled, and his shout was lost in the crash of the gun. But he had a head-start and the sorrel was in the dust at Honey's heels.

Clay's head was down so far that the filly's mane whipped his face. Halfway down the track he heard the sound of the sorrel's hoofs. The mare was creeping up and Clay saw her bleached mane flying at his shoulder. She was all the horse they said she was.

Joel Collins was using his quirt, and the finish line was close ahead. The black and sorrel necks were stretched out together. They were nose to nose. Clay's cheek nearly touched the filly's ear as he shouted, "Honey, beat that mare!" and he felt her drive forward, then they were over the line.

He heard whoops and saw the judges waving as he turned back. He rode slowly up to them. J. B. Kinkead was beating his saddlehorn. Clay was afraid to ask, and his voice trembled, "Who won?"

"Boy, you and her by half a length. I never seen such a drive as that filly put on at the finish."

"Clay!" His father galloped up, waving his hat. "You done it, Son! You beat the Denton mare."

All at once Clay could talk. "It wasn't only the start, Pop. We won the start but we won the race, too. We was all even and Honey pulled ahead and won."

Then Kinkead's voice rose about the clamor. "The Denton mare? Where is she?"

"Why, she ain't stopped running," Tom Drew said. "He don't aim to pay off."

Clay saw the sheen of the sorrel's hide far away. And beside her ran another horse.

"It's Sam Bass with him," Tom Drew said. "I guess they was afraid of the filly all along, and planned to keep going if the mare lost. Well, no use taking after 'em."

"Pop, what do we care?" Clay shouted. "Honey beat the Denton mare!"

As they rode home together, with Honey on a halter beside Clay's cow pony, Tom Drew said, "Clay, you were born knowing about horses, but you got to learn for yourself how some men are made. I reckon you've had your fill of horse racing now."

"I don't know, Pop. I'd like to race that mare again, all even. Honey beat her, but we had to use some tricks ourselves." His eyes shone proudly. "But I know Honey would win again."

"Clay, I reckon you learned something," Tom Drew said, and his eyes held a prouder light than his son's.

The Champeen of the World

by Edward L. McKenna

Some time ago, but not so long that the book won't prove it, two welterweights fought up at the ball park for the lightweight championship of the world. If they were satisfied to give or take a pound, who else should complain? Call them Eddie and Joe.

They had boxed before, over at the Garden. That was a more spectacular fight, more action in it, more excitement for the boys in the cheap seats. At the ball park they knew all about each other and it was just precision and timing and careful boxing and accuracy, and maybe it was a little dull. Neither was a first-class showman; they were a little too honest. No business could be done with either of them. Eddie did bet on his fights: he bet on himself. Joe never bet, probably because his wife wouldn't let him. Eddie had a wife, too, generally.

It was a delight to see them, wherever, whenever they fought, and against anybody. They were lithe and quick and dangerous and smart and brave. Each was knocked out once when he was coming up: Eddie at the Saint Nick; Joe at the Cambria, where he was boxing in B.V.D.'s and a pair of ninety-eight cent shoes. The experience had not taught them cowardice.

This bout up at the ball park was a disappointment to many and to others it was a dream of perfection. Pat O'Brien refereed it; at the end, he looked worse than either of them. All he had to do was to tap them on their wet and glistening backs; he never had to go between them. "Break! All right now, boys! Break!" They'd break; they'd drop their hands and glide away from each other, falling into position like the colored glass in a child's toy, and there would be Pat O'Brien skipping about like Buttercup in *Pinafore,* anxious, solicitous as a mother hen.

Many people hate and abominate professional boxing. Their point of view is to be considered and respected. At its best, it is beautiful and fine and clean. This bout could have taken place in a drawing room, and many a meaner, dirtier one has. There was no blood; there were no knockdowns; there was no false jocosity or amiability, no slapping each other on the back; no words of any

kind passed between them. It was deadly serious; each had met his match and couldn't and wouldn't believe it. They were trying every minute, with everything they knew, except with cheap and paltry tricks which they disdained and discarded. Once Eddie had Joe off balance, turned sideways to him; he didn't lower his hands and walk away, to wait for cheers; he sparred daintily till Joe got set and then he went after him like a mongoose and got a nice left to the mouth for his pains.

It was like that, it was all like that. Anything could happen, nothing did. It ended, as all such bouts should end, not in the middle of the ring and a flurry of wild blows, but with each of them shuffling and shifting and stalking the other. Fresh, eager, unbeaten, even then they could have taken any man their size in the world.

The gong rang twice; they dropped their hands and then reached out and touched each other and went to their corners. In a moment Pat O'Brien lifted his pudgy arm. "The Winner—and still Champion," he said, and Joe went bounding out of his corner, his hands straight out, the knuckles down and Eddie came running to meet him, his hands the same way. They touched each other's soggy gloves; each muttered something and bobbed his head. One had just kept the championship of the world, the other had lost it. There was also the matter of the percentage of about a quarter of a million dollars.

Within a couple of years, Joe retired before anything really bad happened to him; Eddie lost his championship and four or half a dozen fights, besides. He wasn't down-and-out, he wasn't broke; he'd kept some of his hard-earned money. Joe, who couldn't be classified by his dearest friends as being anything like Einstein, had been prudent and lucky and, in his way, even pretty good in business.

From the night they met each other that second time, Eddie and Joe were the best, the closest of friends. Eddie wouldn't put a foot into this town without stopping to see Joe, and Joe's house was Eddie's castle. A pleasure to see them in the ring, for those at least who like it, it was a greater pleasure to see them out of it. Eddie had a bad ear; Joe had a broken nose. Outside of that, nobody would ever guess them to be professionals.

Plainly, expensively, immaculately dressed, quiet and clean-spoken, they had the air and manner of distinguished men. They

weighed about one-fifty-eight or a hundred and sixty pounds; they were proud and careful of their bodies. Eddie never smoked nor drank. Joe might have a little French and Italian vermouth or a dry martini before his dinner; a package of cigarettes would last him for three days. He played handball and took hot showers. Eddie had money worries, which tend to keep the weight down.

Joe would meet Eddie on the station platform. Eddie, as former champion of the world, wouldn't carry a suitcase or a bag; there are porters for that. Joe didn't drive his own car; a broken-down fighter used to do that for him. Eddie and Joe would walk toward each other as they used to walk, as if nobody else in the world were there; they'd put out their hands, perpendicular now, and grab each other. "What do you say, Eddie?" "How you doing, Joe?" Walking a little apart, as stately as two tigers, they'd go down the ramp. "Know who them two is? Know who they is?" "Sure, that's Joe the Butcher, everybody knows him." "No, but the other one, that's Eddie Kennedy. Eddie Kennedy! They fought for the championship of the world." Music unheard is sweeter still; stolid, impassive, Joe and Eddie would walk along as if bathrobes were still fluttering about their heels.

Joe and his wife had many a conversation about Eddie. "Ida, I ask you," Joe would say, "what's that guy think he is? He thinks my house is a hotel, huh? Every time he comes here, he brings you a big bottle of Chanel Number Five. He's got to give Louis a finnif for driving him. He brings presents to all the kids. I'm going to speak to that guy, Ida."

"Joe! The poor fellow! He hasn't got any kids, any home. He comes here; it's like his home. You never smell a drop of liquor on him and no spearmint, either."

"Oh, no! No! He never touches it."

"I wish that fellow could get a good girl, Joe."

"Him! Well, it wouldn't be for not trying. Remember that babe I told you about, the one up at the Garden? I think he was even married to her at the time. She keeps yelling, 'Get him, Eddie! Kill that pork-and-beaner, Eddie! Kill that club fighter! Send him back to Phillie.' Yeah, I try to knock him in her lap—I could do nothing with him. He was all right, that fellow."

"You know what he told Junior? He told him, 'Your pop was very good, in close. All the Philadelphia boys are good in-fighters.

Your pop was the best. But he never clinches; he never hangs on; he never tries to rough you up.' "

"He tells Junior that, huh? Well. Well, you see, Toots, that's the way we learned. Fighting in the amateurs, over at the Bijou, the burlesque theatre. Sometimes they might just as well put the two of you in a cellar. You learn how to take care of yourself like that, you know—So—So he tells Junior that, huh? Ida—you know—you know, I don't think he's going so good—I—He's a funny kind of fellow, Ida. You can't talk to him about it. He'd knock your block off. He's, he's kind of an educated fellow, too, Ida. He told me his people wanted him to be a priest."

"A priest?" said Ida. "How many times he been married, now?" said Ida.

"Yeah. Yeah, I know," said Joe.

It's possible that Eddie knew exactly who it was came to him with backing for a bar-and-grill in New York; maybe he did not. It was one of Joe's friends, and one of Eddie's friends, too. It was just another venture for Eddie, anyway. Joe the Butcher Schultz came over for his opening and stayed three days. There were pictures of them both in the papers, two middle-aged men squaring off at each other, pictures of them in property white coats tending bar side by side. Between them they would have had trouble mixing a Scotch and soda. They hated liquor. The captions gave their names prominence. "Champion and Contender Meet Again—Eddie Kennedy and Joe the Butcher Schultz." "Eddie Kennedy, Former Champion of the World, Poses with Joe the Butcher." Ida clipped the photographs and pasted them in Joe's scrapbook. Joe always professed not to be interested in this large album, but Ida had caught him looking at a picture of himself, from the old *Ledger*, the time he fought Tom McKeon. After that she saved every notice, every small mention of him. There was a fine column by Frank Graham, in the *Sun*, about all the lightweights from the time of Joe Gans and Frankie Erne, and one by Ed VanEvery, a little piece about Eddie by Paul Gallico, a mention of Whitey Fitzgerald by Bill Dooly, referring to the memorable fight between Mooney and Fitzgerald, in which Dooly said, "But it was when Whitey fought Joe the Butcher Schultz that he knew he had come to the end of the trail, because Joe the Butcher had the class . . ." Well, so Joe did have class. He was, as they say, a very stylish fighter.

Eddie's bar-and-grill wasn't a great success; he closed it, quite

honorably, and a little ahead of the sheriff. Eddie had no knack for business. His luck had come to him before he was thirty; the rest of his life was a retrospect, the fitful retrospect of a man who once thought he saw the downward curve of the rainbow's arc just before him.

It wasn't the end for him; it was just another bad guess. He wasn't champion of the world for nothing; he kept right on going. Pursuing one more of his will-o'-the-wisps, he was going out to Chi, to start in again all over. He dropped a line to Joe, and there was Joe to meet him at the station.

"What do you say, Eddie?" "How you doing, Joe?" Sedate, majestic, they walked together. Joe was fighting a losing battle with a paunch; Eddie's hair was almost a too-aggressive black.

There wasn't much of a murmur now, an obbligato that they disdained to hear. Who'd remember them? Why, who was the blocking back for Ernie Nevers, for Albie Booth, for Bruce Caldwell, for Light Horse Harry Lee? Who made the pace for Charlie Paddock? Who rode thigh to thigh with Snapper Garrison? What horse was a fair bet against Sysonby? One time, people could have told you, not now, not any more. One time you're the best in the world, and it's not for long.

Eddie went to Joe's house; it was a routine with them, a ceremonial. Louis had to get his tip from Eddie and Ida had to exclaim over her bottle of perfume. Eddie wasn't broke yet.

"Where's Junior?" he said.

"Well. Well, Junior, he'll be here," said Joe, looking at the three-dollar neckties Eddie had brought for his eldest son.

"Well! Why, sure," said Eddie. "Now, look, Henry—This is a model airplane I got. Alex, I brought you something I always wanted myself. A Punch and Judy show, see? You put your hands in, see, and you make Punch and Judy dance or fight or fall over, anything you want, see? A darb, huh? You bet you. Little Ida, you're getting so big, I brought you a bottle of perfume, too, like your mother—Listen! When do we eat around here? Not like the old days, hey, Joe, a lamb chop and a piece of lettuce and hop on the scales. And hearing those leapfrogs, all the time, haaghr, haaghr! Boy, I'd rather train on the Sandy Hook Light-Ship . . ."

Dinner over, the kids were dismissed and sent to bed. Ida was bustling about; Joe and Eddie were staring ahead of them, looking at nothing, just as they used to before the clanging of a bell.

They had little to say to each other. They knew each other too well. They had been contenders, they had been the two best men of their size in the United States. Their small talk went like this. "'Jever hear anything about Johnny McCloskey? A good boy. They brought him along too fast." "Eddie, you remember Johnny Meally? Always asks to be remembered to you . . ." "Joe, remember Irish Patsy Cline? Remember the time I boxed him?" "I saw him one time. I saw him box Eddie McAndrews. T'ch! Was that something! You remember the way he go, with his head? He was a good boy, that boy." "Little Schugroe! That Schugroe! Listen! Listen, Joe. One time I box K. O. George Chayney. I shade him; all right, so I shade him. All that night, after I take him, my stomach's like in a cast. He was a good boy, Joe." "Bennie Valger, Eddie. You remember Bennie Valger? The French Flash, they called him. He got the decision over K. O. George Chayney. I boxed him one time. Hey, Eddie, You remember Joe Tiplitz? . . ."

They had fought, the two of them, two hundred men. Many they scarcely remembered. There it is, on their records. "K. O. Two rounds." "K.O. Five rounds." "No Decision." "No Decision." They weren't just great boxers. They were fighters. Small fellows, gamecocks, who scrapped in the smoke-filled clubs in Boston, in Baltimore, at the old Claremont Rink in Brooklyn, at the Pioneer, up at the Velodrome, in the National and the Arena.

"Don't sit up too late, you boys," Ida would say. Sit up late? They weren't used to doing that. Eddie, well, Eddie wasn't much of a family man in his day, that's true, but he'd never been inclined to stay up late unless there was a woman to listen to him. They used to go on, to fight, at ten o'clock at night, and they'd eat a little something after it was over. They weren't intellectual fellows. Perhaps that is clear.

"You going to Chicago, Eddie?" "Yes." "You got a Pullman?" "Yes. 11:40 out of the station." "O. K., I go down with you, Eddie." "O. K., Joe."

That was about the last time they ever saw each other. Eddie went out to Chi, and did about as he always did, except when they were saying, "In this cor-nah—Eddie Ken-ne-dy, of Bridgeport, the Cham-peen of the World. Weighing—weighing—a hundred and thirty-two and a half pounds." He was wonderful, then, wonderful, the way he would come out and be introduced, keeping his eyes downcast, his face composed, his hair sleek and shining under

the lights. Nobody who saw him will ever forget him. Joe the Butcher, yes, of course, a very fine fighter, good style, lots of class, plenty of heart, one of the best. But there was only one Eddie Kennedy ever.

Joe heard from him after Pearl Harbor. He was a boxing instructor, up at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station: Lieutenant Edward Joseph Kennedy.

Three months later he got it, just the way he'd have chosen. Not a strep throat, not pneumonia, not T.B. nor the broken heart that comes to a proud man after five or six years of courtesy jobs or cadging for small loans. They knocked Eddie Kennedy out of the sky when they were flying him and seven other officers to the coast.

It developed that he had left a will which was drawn in 1937 by Counselor Louis F. McCabe and deposited with him. He must have had plenty of money then: the bequests were substantial. Several were to women: his latest wife was the beneficiary of his war-risk insurance though he had not lived with her for years.

There was a donation of 5,000 dollars to the Veteran Boxers Association. The rest of his estate was left to Joseph, otherwise, Joe the Butcher Schultz.

When they came to count up what he had, they found it was about two or three thousand dollars—not nearly enough to pay the heirs who were named.

Joe the Butcher, learning this sad news, had a private conference with Counselor McCabe. "Listen, Counselor," he said. "I don't care anything about those babes. They were no good, none of them was any good. But this here five grand to the Veteran Boxers. That's different. I'll pay that, for Eddie. Like it would come from Eddie, see?"

"You want this to be paid, as if it came from his estate?"

"Yeah. That's the idea. It's a good outfit. They help old fighters when they're down and out. Not much; they give them something, try to get them a job, all like that. They send some flowers, when you die, if they hear about it. I and Eddie always belonged to it. Eddie would hate to look cheap. There was not anything cheap about him."

"All right, Joe. I'll see what I can do."

Joe did get something out of Eddie's estate. The counselor brought them around to Joe in an envelope. "These were on one of Eddie's uniforms," he said. "I thought you'd like to have them."

Joe put them in his pocket. "I'll save them," he said. "Maybe my kid will wear them. He can tell everybody, 'Them bars belonged to the Champeen of the World."

"He can say that, all right," the counselor said.

The Red Shuffler Stays In

by Paul Annixter

He belonged to old Cam Calloway and a more incongruous owner could hardly have been imagined. Cam was a southern piney untroubled by ambition. His farm was scratched out of the scrub in the Florida back country.

Cam acquired Ginger Buck quite by chance. The old fern-jumper went out one morning in spring to find Buck, then but a leggy, half-grown cockerel, stalking about the dooryard while the rest of the fowls, including the big Wyandotte rooster, perched on the fence, on the cowshed roof and in the trees, all of them pecked and draggled and spattered with their own blood.

Buck was a line-bred cross of the Southern Claret and Shawl-neck strains, with an admixture of the hardy, furious-fighting Oriental Aseel. The blood of three of the most unquenchably courageous fighting creatures, pound for pound, the world has ever known fused in his veins. Cam had him for nearly a year before he found out what manner of fowl he was. To Cam, during all that time, Buck was just "that gol-ding ginger-color chicken rooster" that kept tearing into his livestock. The fowls once conquered, Buck extended the sphere of his influence to the two hounds, the three pigs, the cat, the cow and the old work horse. Within a week every animal on the place bore the red tracery of his disciplining.

One day in his third week on the place Buck caught one of the roosters by the wattles and played a tattoo on his chest with daggered heels until he fell dead. Cam stormed forth with his twelve-gauge shotgun to do away with Buck. The shot went wild. Buck fled away into the woods and for the next two days every time he returned Cam or Sissy, his leggy, fifteen-year-old daughter, was waiting to drive him off again.

But Buck kept coming back to the barnyard.

It was in his second month at the farm that he earned his right to remain. He had been away in the woods again for three days and had returned one dawn. Old Cam heard a violent commotion in the yard and crept forth with his rifle. What he saw in the first gray light made him stare in dumb amazement.

A mink had just killed a young pullet in the run. Up on the highest roosts huddled the rest of the chickens, squawking in agonized terror. Around the mink in mincing circles, Ginger Buck was doing a sort of weird dance.

Cam was lifting his rifle when Buck came suddenly in at the killer. He swooped on fiercely beating wings, with vicious peck and cunning cruel stroke of the spurs so rapid as to be invisible. The mink aimed snakelike for the cockerel's throat, only to foul his jaws in Buck's hard breast feather. Ember-eyed, he lanced in again and Buck got a billhold on fur and shuffled bloody gashes across the mink's neck and shoulders and punctured one of his eyeballs—all in the small end of a second.

Hissing like a snake, disregarding the burst eyeball, the mink came in again and again. But he was fighting a living flame. Buck was all around and over him, now and then grabbing a beakful of fur from which leverage he would turn loose his spur-shod feet like a buzz saw; then leaping free and feinting with the skill of a boxer for a fresh opening.

Simultaneously the mink got another jawful of feathers and Buck got a billful of fur. Round and round and over and over they whirled for perhaps forty seconds. Both were natural infighters, neither would release his hold. Then Buck tore loose and the snakelike body of the mink whipped blindly against the chicken wire. His other eye had gone. He was done. But he fought on to the end, grimly trying to find his foe.

From that time on Cam never took another shot at Buck. And Buck on his part, never lingered long at the farm. In his journeys into the surrounding woods he had been learning another kind of life, far more intriguing than that of the barnyard. In the miles of scrub pine and fern jungle Buck had found adventure. He was like a wanderer returned to his heath. The touch of Oriental blood in his veins accounted for this, direct heritage of the wild jungle cock, the prototype of all game fowl—a bird that fought to the death with its naked heels for thousands of years in the jungles of India.

The summer was drawing to a close now. September was at hand, Buck's second September. He had reached full growth and achieved the coveted five pound weight for fighting cocks.

This was the time spoken of in the old cocking manuals. "Time when the year old cock will leave food or mate to give battle to any

adversary. Time when the cocker carefully feeds his bird with the crumb of old manchet cut into square bits, at sun rising, when the sun is in its meridian, and at sun setting; or with herb of grace, rosemary, hyssop and butter, alternating this at times with a diet of ale, egg and butter, baked into a kind of biscuit with the addition of wheat flour.

"In between these feedings," say the books, "the cocker will carefully set his cock to spar with another gamecock for a few minutes, or lacking a cock of the game, let him pursue a dunghill rooster till he sweateth and panteth."

Buck's diet and the rest of his training would have made any cock breeder weep with exasperation. There were, however, certain decisive factors at work in Buck's development.

The battle with the mink had been only one of scores of similar death struggles waged in the forest. He had plied back and forth through a hundred square miles hunting trouble and finding it in the form of blacksnakes and water moccasins, which he had learned to chevy into the open and shuffle to death in two or three minutes. Finding it, too, in the form of coons and skunks who had never learned that a chicken was anything but a handy meal, until Buck appeared a chicken of whalebone, whose spur stroke made their fastest parry seem slow.

Buck had led off with a conquest of the deer people. It was a walkaway. At Buck's first fierce frontal attack the timid, shadowy deer would be off in a series of prodigious bounds.

When Buck had his first brush with the bear tribe he was strutting his stuff on a rotten log one day. Out of the thicket waddled a black furry creature with a miniature of itself scampering alongside. The she-bear had hijacked many a delicious meal of fowl from some remote settler's clearing. She reared on her hind legs and advanced. Hackles lifted, Buck danced on the log. His chest went out and his whole being went into a clarion crow.

At the startling cry, so connected in her mind with the abodes of men, the old bear slapped her cub on his fat stern and the two of them dashed away into the woods. Buck with slash and peck sped the cowards on their way.

Soon after this, however, he met the lord paramount of all the wild killers of those parts, an old tom lynx. Masterfully the lynx had stalked the stray chicken up wind, and he was about to scoop the tidbit off the low limb where Buck slept. Buck opened an eye

and crowed in startled challenge. In the same instant he shot like a feathered dart into the round cruel face of the killer. Like most of his kind, the lynx ran mainly to bluff. The startling loudness and unexpectedness of the crow was too much for his high-tension nervous system, and soon he was a hundred yards away and still going.

All through the wonderful golden weeks of fall Buck continued his wanderings. Then came October, time of great unrest in the forest world, time of madness among the game birds, when the cock partridge will attack deer, bear and even man himself, in the heat of the mating fever.

Now was the time when Buck's battle madness was answered to the full by the tribe of birds. Time and again some old-man partridge, brave as any maniac, would challenge him to the death and there would be glorious battle lasting half an hour. The partridge always carried warfare into the air. They were twice as quick on the wing as Buck and he learned many a subtle trick of feint and parry that would never have come his way with bulkier opponents.

What was all this doing to Buck's ego? By the time his high tide really came round in November he was a man fighting fool, fined down to nothing but beak, spur and sinew.

It was Mr. Corey Tate who really brought Buck into his own. Mr. Corey rode out one day in November for one of his periodic hunting trips. He was a well-to-do orange grower from Tallahassee.

Cam was sitting out under the Chinaberry tree when Mr. Corey arrived. Cam had never been so mortal low. His perennial slackness had caught up with him at last. The day before old Ira Eddy, the land man from whom Cam had taken up his timber claim, had sent notice to make up back payments or get out by next month.

Cam had been offering up a prayer in his own way for the Lord to pass a miracle to save him. His wife, Flora May, was lying there in bed. She had been sick for two years and this would just about kill her. Cam didn't feel like going out with Mr. Corey but he couldn't refuse.

They left soon after and there were three high days in the open. Cam could have fattened up on the food Mr. Corey had in his packs, but somehow he could not eat—not with Sissy and Flora May eking along on grease and grits.

They were back and Cam was unloading the duffle from the Ford when Ginger Buck came round the corner of the house. The dunghill fowl clucked nervously and dispersed. Mr. Corey's eye lit.

"Quite a chicken you've got there, Cam," he said. "Some Shawl-neck—a bit of jungle, too." Mr. Corey Tate was a judge of line-bred fighting cocks. "I'd like to see him spar."

"Just walk out there an' you'll see him plenty," said Cam.

"Man fighter, eh? Got a good stance," Mr. Corey went on critically. "What's he weigh?"

"Ain't never got near enough to try weighin' him," Cam replied.

Mr. Corey's eye went to Buck's comb and wattles. "Look here. You've maybe got something here that'll surprise you. How'd you come by him?"

"The danged critter just takened a notion to me," Cam said. "I come out one morning an' there he is aslashin' an' rippin' into my livestock. Where he come from I don't know."

"That would have been about the middle of May, wouldn't it? I had a suspicion of it the moment I saw your bird. That chicken belonged to old Ira Eddy; bred on his place. He got away during the big fire last spring. One of the best bred cocks of the whole ninety-two he was, too. I can remember his name. Ginger Buck, I guess it was. But now he's yours; no law would deny that. Cam, I want to see that bird work. What do you say to my pitting him for you next week? There'll be a big hack fight down at Harney on Wednesday. Old man Eddy himself is holding this main."

Fighting chickens for money—it was all Greek to Cam.

"I'll clip your bird and ready him and I'll handle him and back him with a hundred dollars. If he wins, you take three quarters."

They caught Buck with the aid of a gunny sack. Mr. Corey felt him over carefully. "Rawhide and whalebone. Keep him close-penned till the day of the main, Cam. Feed him nothing but lean beef and eggs or oysters. I'll have his feed sent from town—"

Once more Mr. Corey drove out—the following Sunday—and Cam looked on in wonder at the process of trimming for the tan-bark. Buck's combs and wattles were pared off cleanly, his romp and neck hackles trimmed short and his tail cut to a short fan. Finally his wings were also trimmed feather by feather.

Wednesday came at last and Cam drove down to Harney with Buck in a covered pen under the seat. Cam met Mr. Corey and the

rest of that afternoon was spent billing Buck with other gamecocks, grooming him and fitting him out with long steel spurs.

Shortly after dark, Mr. Corey, carrying Buck under his arm, led the way to an old deserted sawmill on the edge of town. At Mr. Corey's knock a man appeared and admitted them after flashing a lantern in their faces. In the dimly lighted interior a crowd of sixty or seventy men was gathered about a small spotlighted pit.

Out in front of the benches, under a pall of blue tobacco smoke, five or six men moved up and down waving handfuls of greenbacks.

"Twenty-five bucks on the Dom."

"Twenty to ten on the Shawlneck. Who takes it?"

"Fifty even the Dom won't go five pittings."

Mr. Corey explained to Cam the high points. "Those two chickens over by the scales—they're fighting next. The fellows weighing them are the handlers. That Dom belongs to old Eddy. He'll probably win this fight."

Mr. Corey was right. In the second fierce tangle Ira Eddy's gray Dominique drove his steel spur through his opponent's head and the Shawlneck was carried out by his tail. By this time Cam had succumbed to the excitement of the game.

"Double doggone!" he muttered. "That grey was a scrapper."

"Luck," said Mr. Corey. "The other bird didn't get a hold."

The Dom was now pitted against a slow-moving Whitehackle. "If the Whitehackle lasts out the first minute he'll have the Dom sure," Mr. Corey predicted. And again he was right. The White stood up under a minute of slashing punishment, finally achieved a billhold and shuffled the Dom to death.

Meantime men had been pausing to speak to Mr. Corey. The next Cam knew the pit was full of men again, Mr. Corey among them with Buck. He was to fight the victorious Whitehackle. Cam saw Buck weighed. For an instant the two cocks were allowed to peck each other from the arms of the handlers. Their necks strained forward, their hard yellow eyes glared. Buck looked rangy and ragged compared to the other bird.

"Where'd yuh get that penwiper, Corey?" somebody laughed.

"Let go!" cried the referee.

The released birds met three feet in the air in a whirlwind of flying feathers, flashing spurs and bills. It was the Whitehackle who

sprang back first. Ginger Buck was hampered by the unaccustomed spurs. The White drove a gleaming spur into Buck's breast.

"Handle!" called the referee.

Mr. Corey and the other man pulled the chickens apart.

"Hurt yuh that time, Corey," called a voice.

Cam rose from his seat. He thought the battle was lost. But Mr. Corey was holding Buck under one arm, massaging his head. Buck had been learning every instand and the second pitting he sparred, biding his time. Then, ignoring the lethal slashes of the Whitehackle, he bored in, breast to breast. He found a billhold and drew back, shuffling a bit on his own. One second and he was sounding his crow of victory.

Mr. Corey Tate, with Buck under his arm, walked over to the man at the scales and received a handful of bills.

The handlers brought out a stocky, pure black cock, a Red Cuban.

"Three to one on the Cuban," called a voice. "Who wants it?"

Mr. Corey stalled till the last possible second to resuscitate his bird. At the release the two cocks flew together with a thud, stroking so hard their blows could be heard at the far end of the sawmill. Neither had done much damage, but the Cuban was patently more powerful. Buck hadn't recuperated yet.

"It won't be long now," grinned an Eddy backer.

The Cuban, veteran of a dozen hack fights, was a leaping, slashing wing-fighter. Again and again he flew high and drew blood with practiced heel-beats.

"The Cuban'll finish him in another minute," said a man behind Cam.

Another pitting, ending in a rolling shuffling tangle, Buck underneath.

"Still think yuh got a chance, Corey?" loudly called an Eddy gambler. "Five Hundred bucks against two says you're fazed."

Mr. Corey, bending over his chicken, yelled, "That's a bet!"

Cam squirmed and twisted on his bench. It looked like the end; still Mr. Corey didn't seem excited. He was sponging Buck's head with water, running his finger along his throat, deftly stroking his crest.

"On the line!" yelled the referee.

As Mr. Corey and the other handler released their birds, there was an abrupt change. The Cuban had faded in the twenty seconds

of rest, weakened badly, and Ginger Buck had suddenly tapped a new fount of life.

In the two fierce minutes that followed, the grin of expectancy on the faces of the Eddy plungers turned to a look of puzzled consternation. For in every flurry Buck had a decided edge. The pitting ended when Buck leapt high and drove both spurs deep into the Cuban's back.

Mr. Corey handled leisurely. He was in no hurry, for every second the Cuban was growing weaker and Buck stronger.

When the birds were put on the line again, Ginger Buck scratched the planks, his neck stretched forward. The Cuban sagged dizzily, his head bogging to one side. There was another swift flurry, Buck's spurs flashed once; then he stretched his neck upward and crowed. The Eddy handler carried his dead chicken from the pit.

Ill feeling was in the air now. Everyone expected Ginger Buck to be withdrawn, but it appeared Mr. Corey was staying in. The Eddy backers grinned like wolves and picked the best cock they had, a fiery Shawlneck, bred for speed. Bets ran three to one against Buck, but Mr. Corey did not even look the new contender over. Just before the pitting started he took Buck's head in his mouth as if he were sucking a lozenge; then he pressed his mouth against Buck's back and blew lustily for a moment.

"Look at him warm that shuffller up. That boy's a sweet handler, always was," said a man behind Cam.

"Yeah, but that chicken's dead an' don't know it. I'll make it four to one on the Shawlneck."

"Ready," called the referee.

Mr. Corey stalled till the last possible second. He knew he was asking as impossible a thing of Ginger Buck as for a promoter to ask a human fighter for three championship battles in one night.

The Shawlneck was a leaping, slashing fury. There were three full minutes of aerial bombardment in which Buck's shuffle was ineffective and he barely held his own. Twice Mr. Corey had to pull the Shawlneck's crimson-stained gaff from Buck's neck. How Buck managed to survive those three merciless minutes was a wonder to all. Staggering from weakness, bloody from head to tail, he fought a defensive fight, but he fought, every inch of the way. He just didn't know the meaning of quit.

Again and again Cam Calloway went to his feet, his breath hasseling in his nostrils, for it seemed that Buck was down to stay.

Then came the fifth pitting and once again as the two birds were released, a change was seen. Mr. Corey had banked all on that. Buck had revived again. He could no longer be overflown or outmaneuvered. But neither could he overfly the Shawlneck. A dozen times the two cocks thudded together, breast to breast, each recoiling just the fraction of an inch necessary to avoid the other's death-dealing needles of steel.

There was silence round the pit. Then the Shawlneck's gaff darkened one side of Buck's head. No one knew that till later. The next pitting both birds went into the air. There were thrusts and parries in that clash that no one rightly saw. When the pair landed the Shawlneck could no longer keep his feet. Weakly he pounded the turf; then his head sank slowly to the turf.

But Ginger Buck did not crow. He was staggering about, pecking at the air. Both sides of his head were dark now. A shout went up for the winning bird, but Buck did not know he had won his last battle. Mr. Corey handed him to Cam while he waited for the payoff. A few standing close by wondered about the strange look that suddenly came over Cam's face. No one knew till later that Buck had just died under his arm. . . .

It was one o'clock that night when Cam headed for home. He had just come from the house of old Ira Eddy, the landman, where he had erased in one grand gesture two years of back payments on his farm. Wadded in the pocket of his jeans was the remainder of his winnings from the cocking main—two hundred and ten dollars—more than Cam had ever had at one time in his life.

Under the buckboard seat a jug of corn liquor lay forgotten as the miles went by. Cam had tasted a higher fire that night than ever lived in the corn.

The Monarch's Last Tanto

by Robert Sylvester

THE MONARCH started forward as soon as the hard, white ball struck the frontwall. He picked up speed, turned into the granite sidewall and took three quick steps up its perpendicular height, like a man running up a short flight of stairs. The ball was coming back at him along the sidewall, high and hugging the surface the way extra spin will make them do, but he trapped it in the curved basket and shoved himself clear of the wall with his feet. He wanted to make his return throw while he was still plummeting back to the court, but he felt the ball bounce crazily around in his basket and then fly out onto the court.

These new pelotas were too light, he told himself in disgust. They weren't anything like the sound, true Basque balls which could be depended upon not to try any fancy Cuban tricks. These Havana pelotas acted just like Cubans. You never knew which way they were going. The Monarch blew in disgust and signaled for time out. He walked over to the low bench off the rear of the court, savagely ripping at the long binding cord which laced the curved cesta—a reed basket woven to a supple frame—to his thick right hand.

He made a brief show of examining his cesta for flaws. Actually, the cesta meant little to him, flaws or no flaws. The giant Negro who made cestas for all the Havana players, weaving them out of flat reed and cutting the leather gloves to tailored measurement, made his cestas by the dozen. He had none of the personal feeling for one that a ballplayer, for example, feels toward an old glove or bat. The Monarch used cestas as extravagantly as he used bath towels in the shower room. Once he had smashed nine cestas during a single thirty-point game—some by accident and some out of sheer temper.

But he made a pretense of examining it closely while, actually, he was studying to see how his legs were behaving. He stood very still, for a minute, and assured himself that his legs hadn't started any telltale trembling. He looked carefully at the back of his right hand, ridged by the tight binding of the glove cord, and noted that the hand hadn't started to swell. It was important that he

know about these things, tonight. Tonight of all nights. He mustn't overestimate anything tonight.

He leaned back on the bench, sweating healthily, and looked up the court. It stretched before him to the frontwall 250 feet away, its green walls rising to the high-netted skylight of the huge auditorium. Up forward his nimble frontwall partner, the blue-shirted Armando Martínez, walked jerkily back and forth. Down at midcourt his white-shirted opponents, Piston and Guillermo, stood and talked things over, bobbing their heads up and down and talking in Basque.

At his right, where the concrete of the concha floor ended in the red foul line and met the wooden floor of the auditorium, the vertical wire screen protected the tiers of customers. Down close to the floor level the customers stood in knots around the bookmakers, arguing and betting, and the tiers ran sharply up to the high boxes under the eaves, where Havana socialites and visiting Americanos del Norte sat in their boxes and drank what the messengers brought them.

The Monarch sensed that everything was in its place, but he didn't bother to make sure. There really wasn't anything about this jai-alai concha—or any jai-alai concha anywhere in the world—that he didn't know all about. On this one he could about tell by the sound of the ball striking the frontwall just about how it was going to act on the rebound. And he could close his eyes on any part of the court and know just how many steps he could run before he'd crash into the vertical screen. He had been at it for twenty-five years, a quarter of a century. A long time.

Too long, he thought, just to make himself feel better about what he had agreed to do. Had anybody else been an established professional pelotari, or player, at the age of eleven? Had anybody else been undisputed champion for fifteen consecutive years? And wasn't he still a famous, if fading, star at the advanced age of thirty-six? Well, then, nobody could say he hadn't been in it long enough or given it all he had, either.

But somehow this reasoning didn't make him feel any better. The habits of twenty-five years aren't much more easily broken than the granite of the concha, and no matter how he argued with himself it still didn't make him feel any easier about the fact that tonight, in what would be his last game, he was playing crooked. His first crooked game, and his last one. Tonight The Monarch

was abdicating, stepping down after long and honorable service. And even though nobody else in the world would ever know that he abdicated dishonestly, that still wouldn't alter the fact that he knew it.

"I will think about all this later," he told himself. He strapped on his cesta and walked back on the court. Guillermo—The Ox—was playing backwall against him, and he came down the court with his short, deceptive steps. The Monarch watched him closely to see just how far he came. At The Monarch's age it was wise and worthwhile to make a study of the opponents' positions. Piston, The Ox's frontwall partner, edged over to his own right and scowled darkly, testing the pelota which had just been thrown into the game. Piston didn't want a pelota that was too fast. The Monarch was thirty-six years old, but he still threw a ball like a bullet and nobody wanted to give him a fast one. Better use a slower ball and let the old devil chase it around on his tired legs.

The Monarch watched Piston trying to find a dead ball for a minute and then looked up the court for his partner, Señor Armando Martínez, belovedly hailed in the Havana press as The Cuban Flash. The Flash was sprawled out in the center of the court, arms and legs extended, in the attitude of a martyr who rests from superhuman effort. The Monarch sneered in irritation.

"Señorito," he told himself. A fancy little man. He strapped on his cesta and looked up at the scoreboard. It read: Blue 26—White 26.

* * *

"Must you wrap your life in the cover of a pelota," Miguelito Quintero had sneered at him as they sat drinking the pale Cuban beer. They had chosen a table apart from the others and Miguelito had leaned forward, talking with speed and animation while Chinita, saying nothing, studied him enigmatically with her lovely, mysterious eyes. The Monarch had listened a long while, looking from one to the other and then out across the Malecón toward the darkened ships in the harbor and the darker bulk of the Morro Castle against the ocean sky. For a moment his thoughts had wandered to the amount of treachery which had been plotted within and without those tragic old walls, and he had started a mirthless smile. Chinita had reached out and grasped his hand, pressing it a little as if to emphasize Miguelito's words.

"Don't be a Gallego all your life," Miguel had yapped. "What

has the game ever done for you? Maybe you think this Cuban management will give you a nice, fat pension, now that your usefulness had ended. Or maybe you think that nobody can see that you are almost through. Maybe that's it. Or are you depending upon the Montepío to take care of you in your old age?"

It was the mention of the Montepío, which The Monarch had helped to found, that had brought him to at least partial surrender. There had been 275,000 dollars in the Montepío treasury in Barcelona at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. It was an accumulation of dues and fines and payments sent home by Basque jai-alai players in Mexico and Cuba and Peru and Shanghai and Manila and Florida and, also, from all over Spain. It was money which assured every old or crippled pelotari of a decent pension. Money from an organization which took care of its members and kept them honest, too. Protected them from just such treachery as was being plotted with Miguelito, and disgraced them when it couldn't protect them.

The Monarch had laughed briefly, and silently, when he had thought of that part of the Montepío treasury which was rightfully his. Where was it now, he had wondered? In some lobster's pocket. Or buying more bullets to kill more Basques. Or maybe spent for the shells which destroyed Guernica, that fine old Basque city which had sent so many fine young Basques out onto the conchas of the world.

Thinking his troubled thoughts of the Montepío, he had turned and looked at Chinita. She had lifted her head and looked fully into his face, her black and faintly slanted eyes warming him as they always did.

"There are other places in the world, my heart," she had said softly. "We could go to Mexico and watch the bullfights. Miguelito is intelligent. We must think about us, you and I."

He had hesitated only a moment or two longer, but that had been enough to win him at least a partial compromise with his conscience. Miguelito had sighed in disgust.

"Well, then," he had snapped, lighting a cigarette, "if you can't get any sense in your hard head, then listen to our second offer. Play to win, but play it our way. At least you will keep your honor" —here he had sneered faintly—"if you win, even if you win crookedly. We will have to do some other fixing and we can't make

so much money this way. But we can make enough. You want to listen?"

"Estanislao," the Chinita had said softly, pleadingly.

"Tell me this other plan," The Monarch demanded. His hand had trembled a little when he poured the cold bottled beer into the glass. He wasn't sure, then or later, whether he had trembled at the realization of how badly he would soon need money or because, for the first time in his life, he was joining hands with the thieves.

* * *

Piston bounced the new pelota once or twice, ran at the serving line and rocketed a curving service against the frontwall. The ball came back on an angle and glanced off the sidewall before striking the floor. It came at The Monarch knee high and he was on it like a cat. He was going to win this point. He had to. This was one night when he had to win and lose points according to somebody else's schedule. It wasn't easy, but it had to be done.

He stopped the pelota backhanded and let the momentum of his run carry him forward. He swept his cesta shoulder high and whipped it forward sidearm, like a left-handed batter swinging at a high pitch. He hoped he had put enough spin on it to make the ball come back and strike too far forward for Guillermo to take in the air and the bounce too high from The Ox to recover.

Guillermo was playing too far forward, as usual, but he covered more ground than a cathedral. He took The Monarch's shot just as it struck the concrete and slammed it back high and hard. It carried all the way to the backwall and The Monarch, pedaling back furiously on his old legs, just managed to take it on the rebote, and send it along the sidewall past Piston's ears.

This was to be a real good point. Piston speedily took the pelota in the air, stole a crafty glance over his shoulder, and lofted midway between The Cuban Flash and The Monarch. The Cuban Flash came running back, but The Monarch shouted him off.

"Yo, yo," he yelled. He smashed a forehand shot that skidded teasingly along the wall, never bouncing off or quite curving out.

Three thousand spectators stood, their heads swiveling from right to left with the white ball. The Monarch guessed that the point lasted over two minutes before Guillermo, lunging off balance for a faulty rebote from the backwall, fouled out. This time

it was Guillermo who called time. The Monarch sat on the bench and stole a look into the stands.

He could distinguish the shrill screams of the bookmakers, and he frowned, puzzled at the odds they offered. With the score 27 to 26 in favor of The Monarch and The Hash, it was strange that the odds held at even money. They ought to be more like 10 to 7. The Monarch searched the rows of seats until he saw Chinita, the soft fur coat he had bought her thrown back off the slim shoulders, and Miguelito.

Miguelito was yelling at a white-coated bookmaker who had pushed his red beret off his sweating forehead, screamed some reply and held up nine fingers. The bookmaker tucked a slip of paper in a hollow rubber ball and tossed it up into the stands. Miguelito caught it deftly, removed the slip, wadded some money inside and tossed it back.

Well, the Monarch considered, he had just seen another payment made on the farm or whatever it was which would occupy him the rest of his days. He and Chinita could live easily . . .

It was funny, though, why the odds were staying the way they were. He couldn't understand.

* * *

"Never mind who we have to fix," Miguelito had said that night at the café. "Just don't get more than one point ahead after the 26 tanto. Keep it exactly even, losing and winning, losing and winning, until the last point. Then just play anyway you like. You won't lose the last point and your precious conscience will be clear. If you won't make a lot of money by losing, at least make some money doing what we tell you."

Riding home in the big car which wasn't yet paid for, Chinita had sighed happily and rubbed her sleek head against the hard muscles of his shoulder. Driving through the soft night he had thought of the thirty-four pelotaris in Manila, Basques all, and wondered if they were in prison or hiding in the hills or dead.

"It is no use," he had told himself. "Pelota is dead along with the Basque homeland, its songs and language and its freedom. What matters if I drive one more nail into a dead man's coffin? What matters a little evil when there is so much evil?"

* * *

He sighed, a tired man's sigh, and returned to the court. His partner prepared to serve. The Monarch tested the ball briefly.

This was one of the points he didn't want to play, one of the crooked ones. His legs began to tremble. The white ball was in play with a sound like a shot.

The Monarch made two easy returns, watched The Flash make a nice play on one of Piston's murderous angle shots and then, purposely misjudging a rebote from the backwall, threw a "cripple" to Guillermo. The Ox took it like a delighted kid. He smashed an angled return which hit the backwall just where it joined the floor and skipped out safely clear of The Monarch's basket.

It was: Blue 27—White 27.

He took his position again and accepted Piston's service. Guillermo took The Monarch's next smash in the air and threw a low ball which came straight back at Martínez.

"Dale candela, chaval," he shouted. "Give it a hit, kid." The kid gave it his best, sending an angle shot skipping at Piston's ankles. Piston somehow made a recovery.

A real good boy, Piston. But then all Basques were real good boys. He lowered his head and started for the backwall to take a floating rebote. He got his basket on the ball, pivoted hard, like a hammer thrower, and sent a high shot forward with all the spin he could put on it.

Guillermo had backed up to take a straight smash and saw his mistake just a half step too late.

The scoreboard changed to White 28—Blue 27.

Again The Monarch felt his legs tremble as the ball went into play. This was to be another crooked point. Fortunately he didn't have to worry about it. The Cuban Flash, trying to outslug the catlike Piston in a duel of angle shots, was badly outsmarted. So the point was lost honestly, after all. The score was 28 to 28.

One more equalization, The Monarch told himself. One more igualana and then the final tanto; he wished he could stop now. He would like to leave things just as they were. He didn't want to have to think about crookedly losing another point. He called time and sat down.

* * *

Chinita, he thought fondly. He remembered when he had first seen her sitting alone in the stands and had sent a boy with a message. When the boy returned with the news that she had ripped the note to shreds without even opening it, he was delighted. It had reassured him, he who had reason to be cynical about lone women

in tropical countries. He had inquired about to find somebody who knew her and, surprisingly, Guillermo knew her.

Her name was Maraquita Valdez. Guillermo understood there was a trace of Chinese in her ancestry. What did she do? Guillermo had been evasive.

A lifetime of strict physical discipline had brought The Monarch no sophistication or subtlety. But his life was lonely, and lately the loneliness seemed more important than in earlier, happier days. It wasn't long before he decided this woman with the exciting, exotic eyes was the one thing in the world he wanted and was determined to have.

There had been times when Guillermo and Piston and other old Basque friends had haltingly tried to discourage the romance. The Monarch had laughed. Let the Basques have their old-fashioned moral codes. That was about all a Basque had left. He had the girl with the pointed eyes, the sleek beauty, the subtle fire which struck right into his tired and battered body.

* * *

He pulled himself out of his reverie. Guillermo was standing in front of him, talking.

"I say it again," Guillermo repeated, spitting contemptuously, "that Piston and I do not talk with our mouths no matter what we think with our heads. So tell us how you are going to do it and we will make some money on the point-by-point betting, too."

The Monarch felt his back go rigid and the hot sweat on the back of his neck suddenly turned cold. He stood up quickly, his green eyes narrowing quickly under the heavy black brows and his square head thrust forward. He reached out, apparently carelessly, and grasped The Ox's left arm in a vise of thick fingers.

Suddenly, like the crooked pieces of a puzzle falling into place by themselves, he knew what it was that had been making him uneasy. If he was playing this game crookedly to win, then somebody else was playing it crookedly to lose. He realized that it was Piston and Guillermo.

"No Dios ni Hostia," he said aloud, in wonder. He was a fool; neither God nor the Holy Ghost could induce those two Basques to lose a game crookedly.

"Guillermo," he said quickly, "for the sake of our years together, tell me what you know."

Guillermo's eyes widened.

"What I know?" he sneered. "Listen to the odds. You, the great Estanislao Amuchastegui, have the partido at 28 to 28 and the apostadores, the bookmakers, make Piston and me 10 to 7 favorite? What else is there to know, when your woman and a common gambler sit in the stands and bet your money against you?"

"Bet how?" The Monarch snarled his question.

"Bet against you, you foolish old goat," Guillermo said, contempt in his voice. "Do you pretend that you do not know this?"

"Give me a minute," The Monarch said, sitting down slowly on the bench. It couldn't be, he thought, but it was. He could hear the cries of the bookmakers. The odds had changed to 10 to 6 in favor of Guillermo and Piston . . . 10 to 6 against The Monarch.

Footsteps came padding at him and as he looked up, his partner, the señor Armando Martínez, came back and made a pretense of washing out his mouth. Guillermo moved away. Martínez spoke softly, insinuatingly, hardly moving his lips.

"Monarca," he said in his soft Cuban blur, "when comes the final tanto, let me play the first return. I have the instructions." He spit water off the court and walked jerkily away.

The Monarch thought he walked crookedly. Yes! The last crooked piece in the crooked puzzle.

They had him in the middle, all right. It would be the Cuban Flash who lost the final tanto, the last point. But the talk, when it started, would not be of the final tanto. The talk would be about the money bet by The Monarch's girl and by the professional gambler. Money bet by people close to The Monarch and bet against him, bet against him from the start.

He had been smartly swindled by a woman and a gambling thief, like poor Argarate that time in Mexico. He, The Monarch.

"Manolo," he called sharply. The young mulatto came running with a paper water cup which looked like any other paper cup full of water. The Monarch drained the draught of Spanish brandy. Passing behind Guillermo, he spoke rapidly in Basque.

"As a favor, chaval," he said. "Throw me just one rebote."

Guillermo's face was impassive and the ball went into play. Piston and the Cuban kept it up around the front wall for four returns and Guillermo took it and arched a high, floating shot to the backwall. The Monarch turned and waited for the rebound.

It came off the backwall and he took the ball backhand in his cesta and pivoted hard. Midway through his pivot he let his right

leg, the one which had been injured, collapse under him. Before he fell, twisting, to the floor, he sent the rockhard pelota flying up the court as hard as he could.

It carried straight, not more than a foot above the floor, and struck Armando Martínez just below the knee. The Monarch, lying sprawled on the court, could hear the bone break. Then he arose and joined Piston and Guillermo over the injured Flash.

"An accident," he said in concern. "My old knee again."

It was: White 29—Blue 28.

The referee, came lumbering down, staring at The Monarch.

"You know the rules. You can stop and this is the final score. Or you can play it out alone."

"We play it out," he said.

"You old goat," Piston cried, "you haven't seen a day in ten years you could beat us alone."

"We play it out," he repeated.

"Well, then, hurry it up." Estévez told him. Lumbering over to the wire screen, he told an attendant to make the announcement. The stands roared and the odds rose 10 to 3.

"Come on," The Monarch said furiously to Piston. "Throw the ball. Let's see how good you are."

Piston bounced the pelota twice, ran at the serving line, twisted, and made his service.

It came back truly and The Monarch ran forward. Piston had given him a fair serve, instead of sending it up the court where his partner should be, and Guillermo made a return as hard as he could. No fancy tricks. They weren't going to give him anything crookedly easy, but they weren't going to make it crookedly hard for him either.

They were good, honest boys. He arched his broad back and smashed away.

Maybe he was washed up; maybe it was time he quit. But he would quit the way he had always done everything, putting everything he had into it. Maybe he could even salvage this game at the final tanto. He only had to win this one and then win one more. He made a nice pickup and told himself that winning was what he was used to. Winning was easy for him. He laughed aloud when he thought of what Miguelito and the slant-eyed woman were thinking and saying or doing. Whatever they were doing, they weren't going to have time enough to do all the necessary undoing.

He slammed a backhand shot as hard as he had ever slammed one in his life.

The score: Blue 29—White 29.

He took the ball to serve and laughed again. The final tanto. The last point. He didn't bother to look to see just where his opponents were playing. He'd play this final tanto the way he had always played it. He was The Monarch, wasn't he? The Champion. The greatest since . . .

He grunted and sent the service up against the frontwall.

He felt wonderful . . .

On Account of Darkness

by Albert J. Hoban

THE COACH TRAIN from Washington to Boston was jolting its jam-packed way through the night. The Marine sergeant and I had dropped our papers, talking baseball to take the edge off the long hours. His hard young face lighted eagerly as he listened to my stories of Three-Finger Brown, of Burleigh Grimes, the spitter, and of Chief Bender.

"But Hubbell," I said, "was the most resourceful pitcher of them all."

The sergeant sucked a long drag out of his cigarette before he replied. He saw the grumpy conductor coming toward us and leaned over to blow the smoke against the seat in front of us. As he ground out the butt with his boot he said, half to himself:

"The smartest pitcher of all time was Lefty Sullivan."

Then he looked at my puzzled face.

"Ever hear of him?"

"Sure," I replied. "He played a couple of seasons for the Dodgers and then faded like a hundred other hot college pitchers."

I vaguely recalled a little box in the middle of the sport page. It said that Sullivan had left the club after beaning a kid in batting practice. He wasn't important enough to warrant a piece in any of the columns. I couldn't see how anyone would mention him in the same breath with the immortals we were talking about.

"I knew him pretty well in the Islands," said the sergeant as if in answer to my thought. "He coached a team I played on in Manila the summer before the Nips took over. He was on Bataan."

I felt a little let down. The experiences these kids had gone through colored everything. I managed to mumble something about everyone realizing that the men who were on Bataan were always thought of as the greatest in their sports.

He straightened me out on that right away.

"No, I think he's a great pitcher because of a great game he pitched on Mindanao," the sergeant said. "Lefty had strategy." He hesitated a moment and then turned to me.

"You look like an all-right Joe."

He lighted another cigarette. His eyes twinkled in recollection as he began to unfold the saga of Lefty Sullivan.

In the first place, said the Marine, I'm here today because of a weird piece of luck which I can't tell. In the Spring of '42 the Nips picked me up from a certain piece of territory in the Pacific and dumped me in a camp on Mindanao.

Lefty was already there and like everyone else he'd lost quite a bit of weight. But he had a lot of spirit. There were no commissioned officers in the camp. Lefty had taken charge and brought the place up to a point just the wrong side of livable. The space inside the barbed wire could easily hold a couple of hundred midgets so the Nips had pulled their usual trick and cooped up a thousand of us. Every week or so a man fell down in the muck with fever, lingered a few days and was buried. Otherwise it was a dull, miserable hole where the thought that some day a detail of Marines would tramp up to the gate from the jungle and set us free kept us alive.

That is how it was until Major Hawana was placed in charge by the Sons of Heaven.

About three weeks after I'd arrived, we were gulping our bowls of grease and rice when one of the sentries yelled his idea of "Attention." We got to our feet and looked toward the gate.

Sword and smile and thick glasses entered.

It was Major Hawana.

The sentry helped him onto a small table and he looked around as though the smell of the sty offended him. He spoke English.

"I am Major Hawana. Captain Karasi, who has been in charge of this camp, has been transferred to another part of the Empire."

He spoke as though Captain Karasi's new assignment would not be very agreeable. The thick glasses kept sweeping over us, reflecting the light.

"I believe there is room for more discipline in the establishment and I intend to have it."

The glasses flashed in my direction, stopped for a moment like they'd found what they were looking for. His thick lips came back from his teeth. He concluded abruptly.

"That is all."

He jumped down and went through the gate followed by his flunkies. It was all over in less time than it takes to tell. I re-

turned to my chow. Lefty was sitting next to me. He was chuckling to himself.

"This guy's going to put the screws to us, Lefty," I said.

"I know that monkey."

"So what?"

"Didn't you notice how he stepped down so quickly?" asked Lefty. "He recognized me from the old days."

"What old days?" I asked. "And how did you happen to know a Nip major?"

Just then a sentry looked at us and fingered his rifle.

"Tell you later," Lefty promised.

While we were doing K.P. that afternoon he gave me the word.

Back in the thirties the Nips sent a lot of college boys, with cameras, over here to play baseball, which is their second national sport. They were very fast and the fastest was Mitsui University's team. A Jap named Hawana was their first-string pitcher. Mitsui licked about the best of our college teams and even gave one of the league clubs an interesting afternoon. The Nip coach slated Hawana for the Bolton game and Lefty, who was red hot that year, opposed him.

When Lefty told me the story he didn't go into great detail, but it turned out to be a pitchers' battle and he won. Hawana seemed to take his licking like a man and invited Lefty to dinner after the game. They had a long chat. Hawana asked a lot of questions. They had a regular bull session about baseball during which Lefty learned something about the Jap game. Umpire's decisions are never questioned in Nippon. As Hawana explained it, the umpire is a sort of a representative of the Emperor's Justice so he can't be accused of making a mistake. If he calls a real bad one he's brought so much shame on himself and the Emperor that he's expected to call it a day and begin a new life in the hereafter.

Lefty found Hawana very interesting and even gave him a half promise that he'd come to Japan someday and pitch a game in the interest of Jap-American relations. That was the last he'd seen of Hawana until that morning.

"Betcha I get a call to go to the front office," said Lefty.

He did. But not before we'd learned more about Major Hawana.

When you're in a place like that for a few weeks you get to believe that it couldn't be worse. After Hawana's little talk I found out how mistaken I could be. In no time at all even the greasy look

that was in our gruel, and which we felt was somehow associated with nourishment, disappeared. The Nips suddenly became aware that some Marines might like the looks of their smooth, sandy beach, so they put us to work sawing palmetto logs for barricades. For every pair of men working there was a sentry standing ready to prod you with his rifle. The little bit of netting that we'd carried with us and which had not interested old Karasi was taken away one week end. When one of the boys asked a Jap lieutenant why, he was told Major Hawana wanted more co-operation. We never learned what you had to do to co-operate until Lefty came back from his chat with the major.

"I'm glad you fellows are around," Lefty began when he saw the little group waiting. "Hawana made me a proposition which I accepted without much thought. You fellows have got to do some scouting for me."

"What's the story, Lefty?" I asked.

"It seems our friend the major remembers the shellacking he got from my college ball club and wants a little revenge. He wants us to play a team from the barracks a week from Monday."

A couple of the boys said they wanted to be counted out.

"I don't like the idea of playing against the Nips myself, but Hawana said it would be considered a refusal to co-operate by the whole camp," Lefty explained. He gave a smirk and added:

"Besides, I think maybe I've got enough in the old soup bone to take care of Hawana and his little gang."

It seemed pretty obvious, particularly when we found out later that some of the generals and admirals from the Jap High Command were inspecting the camp on the day of the game, that the major wanted to show off his prize catch. Tokyo propaganda has never been able to dim the reverence Japs have for American big-league ballplayers.

On the other hand, with Lefty in the box we figured we could certainly beat the bums we saw practicing every afternoon outside the enclosure. Hawana evidently thought the same thing after he saw us warming up a couple of times, because the first thing we knew strange faces began to appear on the diamond. By the Saturday before the game he'd flown in about the best pro team in the Empire.

On Sunday, Lefty was called again to the front office. I'd helped him quite a bit in rounding up talent so he took me along. Ha-

wana sat grinning behind a rough table. Lefty explained that I was coach of the team. The glasses caught me and returned to Lefty.

"I wanted to explain a few things about the game, Sullivan." His English was perfect but it whistled on the way through his teeth. "Several admirals and generals of the Japanese Imperial Navy and Army will attend the contest. For security reasons I cannot give you their names, but they are among the most powerful and esteemed men in the Empire."

He was being very impressive.

"You did not tell me that this was to be any more than a camp game, Major," said Lefty.

"You are very fortunate that it is not merely a camp game as you call it. You will have a chance to demonstrate that if Americans cannot win battles they can at least play games."

Lefty reddened, but was silent.

"Needless to say," added Hawana, "I shall not play on the Imperial Team."

"You disappoint me," Lefty said quietly.

Hawana ignored the insinuation.

"One more thing, Sullivan. I have attended and played in several games in the United States where the rulings of the umpire were questioned by players. Such conduct will not be tolerated tomorrow. In Japan the umpire's word is the voice of the Emperor's Justice. That is all."

The sentry opened the door, but Lefty asked, "And who is to be the umpire?"

"I shall umpire the contest," answered Hawana.

We were conveniently out of the camp when the inspection took place, and when we returned from work we had to wait until early evening before it was the pleasure of the inspecting officers to watch our little game. Finally the bandy-legged ringers, who'd been practicing Saturday, ran on the field all decked out in poor imitations of the 1938 Red Sox uniform.

When the Sons of Heaven were all properly seated on palmetto bleachers which we had built, they let us out of the enclosure. I handled first base and it did my heart good to see old Lefty with his long, slow windup whip the ball to a kid named Hebert who'd backstopped a couple of years in the Southern Association.

I could see the spectators' heads bobbing as Lefty threw the ball right by the first three men up. They went down swinging, but the

ball was on its way back from Hebert by the time they got the bat around.

Major Hawana squatting behind the plate, did not look happy.

Unfortunately our boys were mostly high school players and couldn't do much with the roundhouse curves dished up by the Nip pitcher. After five innings we bunched a couple of hits, and an error by the shortstop gave us the lead. As we ran to our positions I noticed the major speaking to the Nip coach.

From that time on there was considerable less swinging by the home team. They were on their second time around now and one or two managed to touch wood to the ball. Lefty began walking a man here and there in a crucial spot. I noticed Hebert was holding the ball quite awhile after some of the called balls.

"Some of those look pretty good to me," I mentioned to Lefty while we were at bat in the seventh.

"They're strikes in any league but this one," said Lefty. I guess old Hawana can't afford to lose. He's sure doin' an awful job on the Emperor's Justice."

He looked at the sky.

"Maybe he can't see 'em so well in the dark."

By the middle of the eighth Hawana was becoming desperate. He must have passed the word that the Nips were not to lift the bat off their shoulders. They just stood there like statues and Lefty cut the plate in two. Hawana walked a couple on what should have been eight strikes. Our third baseman kicked a bunt and then threw it over my head. Score 1 to 1. We managed to get the side out without another run.

In our half of the ninth we did nothing. It was growing dark rapidly and it was almost impossible to see even the slow curves of the Nip pitcher against the dark jungle that ringed the outfield.

I went out to first base feeling pretty low.

Those monkeys dolled up in brass in the bleachers all knew what Hawana was doing. They would hand him a ceremonial knife if he let the Yankee dogs beat the Sons of Heaven in their presence. And they were all patting themselves on the back at the brand of the Emperor's Justice being dished up by Hawana. So long as they could pretend ignorance, it was just another chance to show up the Yankees.

Sure enough the first and second men walked. The third bunted and was out on the sacrifice. The winning run was on third and

they tried to squeeze. The bunt was right in front of the plate and even Hawana had to call the man coming in from third out at home.

Now it was really touch and go. Two outs and a man on third. Lefty threw eight balls that I could not see because of the darkness and Hawana called them all balls, the Nips standing motionless at the plate. I walked over to Lefty.

"Let's quit, Lefty."

The words were no more than out of my mouth when I wanted them back. The trap was sprung and we were in it. If we quit, the dirty Yanks were cowards. If we hung on, Hawana walked the next guy and we were licked. I went back to first without waiting for Lefty's reply.

He threw three more. Twice Hawana's left hand went up. I could almost see him licking his thick lips. He was going to work Lefty to three and two and then walk the batter, forcing in the winning run. It kept getting darker. For a foolish moment I considered asking to have the game called.

Lefty heaved in two more and sure enough the count was three and two.

Hawana took out his little brush and dusted off the plate.

Lefty called Hebert out. They conferred for a moment. Maybe they planned to have Hebert duck this last fast one and let Hawana have it, for I could see Hebert's grim smile and nod. Lefty went back to the mound with the ball in his hand, surveyed the infield, the outfield and the baserunners. Across the twenty feet between the mound and me, Lefty's chuckle was just audible.

He leaned forward from the rubber, peering at Hebert. He nodded and the great long arm made its arc, meeting the gloved hand and then whipped around behind his left leg. He fairly lunged toward the batter who stood motionless, his bat on his shoulder.

There was a loud smack from Hebert's glove.

Hawana's left arm shot up.

"Ball four, take your base."

As soon as the batter reached first, Lefty walked toward the bleachers where the Sons of Heaven were stirring in their seats, making ready to leave.

Hebert sauntered over, followed by Hawana.

The rest of us tagged along, sensing something unusual.

As Lefty approached the stands the Nips leaned forward. The medals hung from their uniforms.

Removing his hat, Lefty opened the glove on his right hand and displayed the shining white baseball that had not left his glove on that last fateful pitch. He tossed it into the dirt at Hawana's feet.

Before we turned to follow Lefty to the enclosure I could see the Sons of Heaven looking from Hawana to the ball at his feet and back again.

A few minutes passed and when I looked back I could hear them hissing at each other through the dark which had helped Lefty play the old hidden-ball trick.

I could just make out the shadowy form of the Emperor's umpire who stood with bowed shoulders before the Nip brass hats.

I looked for the glasses that had flashed so often in the sunlight and the fangs he used for teeth, but could make out only the outline of his head.

Somehow, in the darkness, Major Hawana had lost his face.

Date Due

F JUL 12 '51			
F APR 1 0'59 APR 15 1959			

85

2-20-50

808.3
E77e
C2

Esquire's 2nd sports reader, main
808.3E77e

3 1262 03190 5531